Thomas Williams

THE Countries Senſe OF LONDONS Sufferings

In the Late moſt Lamentable Fire;

DISCOVERED

In the Opening and Improving the *Lamentations* of *Jeremy*;

And in the Reſolving of Three Queſtions, not onely ſuitable to that ſad Diſpenſation, but Conſiderable alſo in all Grievous Afflictions.

By *W. T.* A well-wiſher to the City, and to thoſe that Suffer with it.

Lam. 1. 12. *Is it nothing to you all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any Sorrow like my Sorrow.*

LONDON, Printed for *John Sims*, living at *Greſham* Colledge-Gate in *Biſhops-Gate-Street*, 1667.

Walter Wilson.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Christian, and Religious Readers, especially such as are concerned in the late, and most Lamentable *London-Fire.*

Well Beloved, and dearly respected in the Lord;

IT *is an old and sad complaint,* (a) *that when the fury of the Lords Anger was poured forth upon his own sinfull people; so that they were* set on fire round about, *yet* they knew it not, *took no notice of it,* laid it not to heart, *took no thought for it; from whence ariseth another evil also, and that is, a want of the fear of God within, because men know not the terrours of God without, yea, a*

(a) Isa. 42. 24, 25.

ſtout ſtanding out with him, becauſe though he wound us exceedingly, yet we are heart-whole ſtill; Plague-proof, War-proof, Fire-proof, *as if it were a feebleneſs of mind, to ſtand in fear of God; But if a magnanimous* Moſes, *that feared not the face of a Great King, was yet ſo affraid* of the Anger, and hot diſpleaſure of God, (b) *we have reaſon to reckon it, not a diſparagement, but a duty, to fear as* Moſes *feared; and when our God appears* as a conſuming fire, (c) *to ſpeak as* Moſes *ſpake, and with much ſenſe to cry out,* who knoweth the power of thine Anger? (d) *It is but a piece of Heatheniſh foolhardineſs, when an hopeful Child is caught away by an immature death, to turn it off with this Stoiciſme,* I know I begot one that was mortal: *And when God hath*

(b) Deut. 9. 19

(c) Heb. 12. 29.

(d) Pſal. 90. 11

hath taken a mans Eſtate, and thrown it into the fire, to ſay, What is it to me if all be taken from me? for All that is mine I carry about with me: *But it is a worſe, and a more dangerous impudency for thoſe in the Church, that ſhould know better, how great and terrible the Higheſt Majeſty is, to brave it out in the face of an incenſed God, and to ſay ſtoutly (as if they would be revenged on a ruining providence)* The Bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewen Stones; the Sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars: (e) *with ſuch froward perſons God will* ſhew himſelf froward; (f) *for, though it be blaſphemy to faſten (in a proper ſenſe) frowardneſs on that Glorious God,* in whom there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning, (g) *Yet he*

(e) Iſa. 9. 10.

(f) Pſal. 18 26.

(g) Jam. 1. 17.

will do that with froward men, in regard of the Action *(materially considered) which men do, that are under the* Passion *of frowardnesse, or an irritated displeasure; that is, as men truly froward, cross and vex those that are vexatious to them; So the Lord (albeit He be uncapable of any commotion, yet) will pay wicked men in their own kind,* walk contrary to them, (h) *He will* vex them with all adversity, (i) *and absolutely* out-wrestle *all such who make, as if they could out-wrestle him. From all this, it will follow, that it will be, not only a duty, but a benefit, and a safeguard to us, to lay to our hearts, as every other remarkable Judgement, so in special, the late most fearfull* Fire, *whereby God hath so sadly visited, not onely the Chief City, that hath been so long* the Glory of the

(h) Lev. 26. 23, 24.

(i) 2 Chron. 15. 6.

the Nation, *but even the whole Nation: For what is ſaid of the Sun, may be ſaid of the* London-Fire, *No conſiderable place in the Land is* hid from the heat, (k) *and the hurt of it; yet it is that great City it ſelf, that is moſt eminently in the Judgement, yea, and ſo ſtrangely alſo, as that what hath been ſaid in a very ſad caſe heretofore, may be reſumed in this,* Hear this ye Old men, and give ear all the Inhabitants of the Land, Hath this been in your dayes, or in the dayes of your Fathers? (l) *It's true, there have been great fires long agoe in that famous City, eſpecially that in* William *the Conquerours Reign, that from the Eaſt-gate, to the Weſt-gate, Conſumed Houſes and Churches all the way, and among the reſt,* St. Pauls *Church.* Sir R. Baker's Chron. D. 1, p. 38. *But this*

(k) Pſal. 19. 6.

(l) Joel 1. 2.

this is a Non-ſuch. *Many pens will record, and relate the Story. That which I would afford my weak aſſiſtance to, is, the ſpiritual management and improvement of a diſpenſation (outwardly) ſo extreamly deſtructive; For which purpoſe, I ſhall point more particularly, unto the* Author, Cauſe, *and* Uſe *of it.*

1. Firſt, *The Author, and principal Agent in that Providence, wherein there are ſo many ſad Patients, is God Himſelf, which hath been intimated before all along, but now comes to be more conſidered: I ſay, it is God Himſelf; for* Is there any Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? *Eſpecially, ſo remarkable an evil, wherein ſuch a convincement is ſtampt of the hand of Heaven, that every man that hath any acquaintance with God,*

cannot

cannot but say (as they said that had none) (m) This is the finger of God. *That this may be better observed, God makes the Question, and gives the Answer himself:* Who gave *Jacob* for a spoyle? Did not the Lord? *Can any deny it? Yea, He (as was said before)* Set him on fire round about. *Many bad Instruments there may be (as often are) detected or suspected; but our supream thoughts must fix on the Supream Governour of the World, whose Spirit turns every wheel in the various events, that are here below,* (n) *although therein Angels be the Instruments, for all their movings are under the Spirits guidings and government; Not that God hath any thing to do with the Actions of Ungodly and Inhumane men,* as they are sins, *but he hath to do with them,* as they are

(m) Exod. 8. 19.

(n) Ezek. 1. 20.

Acts

Acts of Divine Juſtice. *This truth we may take from the mouths and teſtimony of the great Inſtruments themſelves, namely, of the Captain of the Guard under* Nebuchadnezzar, *(a principal Agent in taking* Jeruſalem *firſt, and burning it after) who yet ſaith truly & plainly,* (o) Jer. 40.3. Now the Lord hath brought it. (o) *So we may ſay, it was God that burned the Temple, in the laſt, and moſt wofull deſtruction of Re-built* Jeruſalem, *for* Titus *that took the City, would have ſaved it if he could,* Joſep. de bello Judaico, lib. 70. cap. 10. *Nay further, the Devils fire, wherewith he burn'd* Job's *Sheep and Servants, is called* the Fire of God, (p) *and ſo may be, not only becauſe it was ſo great a fire, but alſo becauſe, as men cannot fetch fire out of anothers Houſe, no more could the Devil* (p) Job 1. 16.

out

out of the Air, which God owneth, without the owners leave. O that we could seriously consider, that in all our disasters that befall us (in this particular) we have to do with God, and that all of us, and each of us, (for the Fire within the Walls extendeth it self far and wide without the Walls;) I say, O that each of us would quietly sit down, and say seriously and affectionately to our own Souls, 'If 'this Affliction come from the most 'High God, (that may do what he 'will with me) then I must be 'humble; if from the most Mighty God, (that can crush me before 'a man crush a moth, (q) when He 'pleaseth) then I must be quiet; 'If from the most Just God (provoked by my sin) then I must be 'patient and penitent, for he punisheth no man but he deserveth 'it,

(q) Job 4 19.

'it, and it is less also then he de-
(r) Ezra 9. 13. 'serveth; (r) *If it be from a God*
'that repenteth of the Evil, *and is*
'*prone to be pacified, then I must be*
'*hearty and hopefull; And lastly,*
'*if it be from a God that turns all*
(f) Rom. 8. 28. '*to good to those that love him,* (f)
'*then I must be thankfull and*
'*chearfull: Yea, all these call us*
(*now God hath done his will*) *to*
this conclusion, The Lord hath gi-
ven, and the Lord hath taken,
(*and the Lord can give the like a-*
gain, or that which is better) Bles-
sed *therefore* be the Name of the
(t) Job 1. 21. the Lord. (t)

2. Secondly, *The Cause of such*
Causa admirationis, est ignoratio causæ. *Divine Severities comes to be ta-*
ken notice of. We wonder at so un-
wonted a stroke; but the cause of
our wonder, is, the ignorance, or
the non-observance of the cause.
Now my meaning is, not to deny,
that

that God layeth on men, yea especially on his Holiest Servants, many very heavy things for their tryal, and for other causes best known to himself; (u) *yet the common cause,* (u) Josh. 9. 1, 2
and always the fundamental cause, is sin, sin still lies at the bottom, and if it be not the reason, *yet it is the root of all Affliction. Thereby we procure such heavy things unto our selves, and even extort them from that God that* doth not willingly afflict the Children of Men. (w) (w) Jer. 2. 17. Lam. 3. 33.
All disturbances arise from differences; as of humours in the Body; of turbulent Parties in the State; of dissenting and stirring Parties in the Church, and sin stirs in all; yea, our froward spirits contend with Gods spirit, (x) *and then,* (x) Gen. 6. 3.
(when there is no remedy, when men will not be ruled or restrained by any fair means) the provoked

God

God contends by a Flood, as he did with the Old World; and by Fire, as he did with Sodom, and afterward, with his own People: The Lord called to contend by Fire, and it devoured the deep, and did eat up a part; (y) *Where it may be noted by the way (and that we may not think that when Fire is spoken of in Scripture, such a fire is still meant, as we now lament, that is, a fire properly so called) I say, it is to be noted, that ordinary fire is so fierce and active an instrument in laying of all in the dust, which it layes hold upon, that thereupon the highest punitive of destructive providences, (as the Sword, Drought, Civil Dissentions) go under the name of fire, yea, and the torments of Hell it self.*

(y) Amos 7.4.

(2) Isa. 42.25. Joel 1. 19, 20. Isa. 9. 18, 19.

But now, If the Question be, What sin is it that causeth this or that

that fierce Desolation? that's harder to determine; yet it will give us some light, to observe what the Scripture saith, and setteth forth, as the fewel of this Fire;

As Namely:

First, The Sin of Idolatry, *In regard whereof, God saith,* Ye *that is, Ye Idolaters, (not I, but ye, that sin of yours being the cause, without which I should never have done it)* Ye have kindled a fire in mine Anger which shall burn for ever. (a) *But to let this pass (which yet God will not let pass, as the Scripture every where shews) That which all of us are concerned in, is spiritual Idolatry, which we easily fall into; as by setting our hearts upon a Stately House. When* Nebuchadnezzar *said,* Is not this Great *Babylon* that I have built by the might of

(a) Jer. 17. 2, 3, 4. and Jer. 7. 8, 20. Isa. 1. 31.

my Power, and for the Honour of my Majesty? (b) *Sure he made in that God-provoking boasting, either his House his God, or himself, or both together, and it prov'd accordingly; for he was made less then a man, that would not let God be a God. It amounteth also to as much, if a man set and settle his heart upon the rich furniture he hath in his House, or his full Barns;* (c) *and a fair Estate; Wherein even a* David *was not without fault, nor without smart, for he over-much divided his acquiescence, and hope of not being removed, between that Mountain, which he confessed God made him, and that God that was the Maker of it, and so made his God* to hide his face from him, (d) *and then he was* like them that go down into the pit. (e) *No marvel if he were much*

(b) Dan. 4. 30.

(c) Luke 12. 19 Prov. 18. 10, 11.

(d) Psal. 30. 6, 7.

(e) Psal. 143. 7.

much troubled; *for God will let his ſervants know, that he cannot endure that they ſhould put a ſtrong God, and a ſtrong Mountain together, (as the* Galathians *jumbled faith and works together in the point of juſtification) God will have no ſharers in the matter of Confidence; And yet, how hard a thing is it for us to truſt God without a pawn; or if we have a pawn, not to truſt in the pawn without Him, or at leaſt,* with him, *and both are a piece of Spiritual Idolatry.* Gal. 5. 4.

Secondly, The ſin of Errour. 2.

That makes God to come *(and that not only to the Actors, but to the Sufferers thereof) that is, to come in judgement, and as an enemy* to fight againſt them; (f) *and when he ſo comes,* a fire goeth before him, and conſumeth his E- (f) Rev. 2. 14, 15, 16.

(g) Psal. 97. 3. nemies round about him, (g) *yea, he threatens to fight against such* with the Sword of his mouth, *that is, with his Word, and that's Fire*
(h) Jer. 5. 14. *also,* (h) *for so we find it to be in the mouth of* Jeremiah, *and of the*
(i) Rev. 11. 5. Two Witnesses. (i) *Nay further, gross Errour, obstinately persisted in, and grown up to a grown and unmovable Heresie, brings the fire of Hell, for it is;* Damnable
(k) 2 Pet. 2. 1. Gal. 5. 20. Heresie. (k)

3. Thirdly, Prophaneness and wickedness of all sorts: *For though God send fire, yet it's sin in the generality that sends for it, and it comes, because* men would not walk in Gods wayes, nor be o-
(l) Isa. 42. 24. bedient to his Law. (l)

Nevertheless, There are some sins that bring a fierce Judgement more especially: As——

1. First, The sin of Injustice and Cruelty:

Cruelty: *This fired* Jerusalem, *This* kindled a fire in Zion, that devoured the foundations thereof. (m)

(m) Lam. 4. 11, 13, 14.

Secondly, The sin of uncleanness: Sodom *did suffer a temporal fire, and doth* suffer the vengeance of Eternal Fire; *and why? but for* giving themselves over to Fornication, and to strange flesh. (n) *Hence arose the fire of Heaven first, and the fire of Hell followed after.*

2. And Ezek. 22. 3, 9, 12, 21.

(n) Jude v. 7.

Thirdly, The sin of Worldliness, *spreading forth it self in three branches*, Desire, Delight and Dependance. 1. An immoderate desire, *when men* will be Rich, (o) *and* enlarge their desires as Hell; *This greediness and covetousness brings the wrath of God,* (p) *which is ordinarily compared to fire,* (q) *and which when mens hearts are*

3.

(o) 1 Tim. 6. 9. Hab. 2. 5.

(p) Eph. 5. 5, 6.

(q) Psal. 79. 5.

impotently and unmeaſurably ſet upon worldly and carnal contentments, ſo that they even murmure againſt God, when they have not what they would have, and what their voluptuous hearts deſire; I ſay, when it is ſo, we find that the wrath of God hath brought a fearfull fire with it, (r) —— 2. An exceſſive delight. *Many are not Covetous, and ſtill ſcraping to get the things of this world, but yet they love dearly Rarities, Delicacies, the fine and pleaſing things of the world: Now from this affecting of* bravery, *it is, that the* Gates of Zion lament and mourn; (s) *to wit, becauſe they are deſtroyed by fire, for that was it which they came to at laſt.* (t) —— 3. A depending and reſting upon worldly holds, *which God hath long agoe in this manner threatned,* He ſhall be-

(r) Pſal. 78. 21.

(s) Iſa 3. 18, 26

(t) Lam. 2. 8. with Neh. 1. 3.

beſiege thee, till thy high and defenced walls come down wherein thou truſted'ſt: (u) *There's the curſe and the cauſe, and we know, they that beſieged them, burn'd the Gates with Fire, and brake down the Walls to the ground. It's a wonder, if they* that truſt in Riches *enter into the Kingdom of God,* (w) *and if they do not, they muſt enter into, and be ſhut up in a place of everlaſting fire.* (x)

(u) Deut. 28 52

(w) Mar. 10. 24.

(x) Mat 25. 41

4.

Fourthly, the ſin of Sabbath-breaking, *concerning which it is ſaid,* If ye will not hallow the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in the Gates, and it ſhall devour the Pallaces of *Jeruſalem,* and ſhall never be quenched. (y) *This I muſt needs commend to the Inhabitants of that great City, (ſometimes leſs guilty of this ſin, but in latter times more) as a matter of the greater*

(y) Jer. 17. 28.

consideration, because the fire began on the Sabbath day, that is, on the Christian-Sabbath-Day in the morning, wherein the just Lord in the midst of us, who bringeth his Judgement to light every morning, (z) *seemed to say, I will now make that a sad working-day to them that cared not for my holy-day; you shall work in the fire, and that to little purpose too, for you shall not out-work it: How hardly was that fire quenched? How long was it in doing? No marvel, for Sabbath-prophanation every where aboundeth, and is hardly restrained any where: I do not limit this to* London, *for both the fire and the fault go through the whole Land.*

(z) Eph. 3.5.

Now, how would it be with us, and how hopefull a thing, if we could take deeply to heart, these and the like causes of our Consumptions

ons and Conflagrations? Yea, how neceſſary is it for us ſo to do? And therefore I hope my largeneſs therein will not be judged unneceſſary and tedious: Never will there be any good cure, till the cauſe of the diſeaſe be found out, and got out: Give me leave therefore to add a little more, to excite us to the pleading of the cauſe of God againſt our ſelves; and that each of us in particular, with reſpect unto the former particular, (viz.)

Polus verſatur in Univerſalibus.

I. Firſt, Spiritual Idolatry, *'I had 'an Houſe, and had not that Houſe 'my heart? Have not I walked in 'mine, ſomething like* Nebuchad-'nezzar *in his Houſe? I had a 'State, and had not that State my 'Faith? Did not I hug my ſtate-'hold, and in ſome part relie upon 'it, as* Aſa (a) *did on the King of 'Syria? Had not I two ſtrings to*

(a) 1 Chr. 16. 7.

'my

'my bow? The God I had, and the
'Goods I had?

2. Secondly, Errour in Religion:
'Is it not the fire of Errour, and the
'fire of that fire, that is, zeal, and
'earnestness in errour, that hath
'kindled this fire? And am I in-
'fected with no errour? Do I e-
(b) See Ps. 26. 8. and 42. 4. and 82. 4. and 122. 1, 2, 3, 4. 'steem the Congregations, (b) and
'Meetings of the People of God to-
'gether, wherein the Word of God
'is truly taught, and the service
'of God rightly, reverently, most so-
'lidly, and solemnly performed? do
'I enquire into every thing, as that
'I may not be ungroundedly hin-
'dred by any thing from coming to-
'gether with others into one (com-
'mon) place, to participate in Gods
(c) See 1 Cor. 11. 20. Heb. 10. 25. 'Ordinances? (c) Or if there be
'any thing whereby I am justly
'hindred, is that a great grief un-
'to me? Have I high thoughts of

'both

'both the Sacraments, which the 'Lord Jesus Christ hath institu-'ted, for the (d) ingrafting of me 'and mine into him, for the (e) re-'membrance of him, and groweth 'up in him?

'In special, have I remembred 'my absent, but spiritually present, 'and self-giving Saviour, in this 'Sacrament of the Lords supper, 'so often, so preparedly, so affe-'ctionately, so fruitfully, so joyful-'ly, and thank-fully as becomes 'them who call Him their Belo-'ved, and who look and long for his 'coming again? No marvel if 'Joabs field were set on fire when 'he could not get Absolom to come 'near him; (f) Sure it is not to be 'wondred at, if Gods wrath break 'out as fire, or in fire, when so ma-'ny do carelesly shut up them-'selves in their houses, out of a 'pro-

(d) Gen. 17.7. and Act. 2.39.
(e) 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26.
(f) 2 Sam. 14. 30.

'*profane spirit, and with the con-*
'*tempt of publick administrations,*
'*which I know they that are regu-*
'*larly godly, do not, but too many*
'*do; and they that are better, are*
'*to see and search that they be not*
'*mistaken about this matter; choose*
'*the best publick Meetings, and*
'*settle under them, but forsake not*
'*all, especially upon the Lords*
'*day; Enquire about that: Hath*
'*not that Holy day lost some part*
'*of that Reverence (of late) and*
'*of that honour which it was wont*
'*to have in my heart, and in my*
'*house? Have I not lower thoughts*
'*of it, then I was wont to have?*
'*Is not my judgement about it*
'*changed?*

3. Thirdly, Injustice. '*If I have*
'*not been dissolute in my carriage,*
'*and debanch'd (as many are, for*
'*whom nothing remains, but either*
'*Repen-*

'*Repentance or Hell-fire*) *yet have*
'*I not ſometimes* over-reached?
'*taken of others, as I would not*
'*they ſhould have taken from me?*
'*and ſhall I wonder if I find God*
'*the Avenger of all ſuch things?*
1 Theſſ. 4. 6.

Fourthly, Uncleanneſs: *Hath God never ſeen ſomething of that fire in me, that had need to be fired out of me? is there not ſomething of* Sodom, *and of* Sodom-*like* Jeruſalem *in me?* (g) 4.

(g) Jer. 13.27.

Fifthly, Worldlineſs: '*Is it*
'*not my Worldlineſs that hath*
'*caught away ſo much of the*
'*World? Have not I had too*
'*ſtrong an appetite to theſe earthly*
'*Enjoyments? Have not I ſought*
'*too* great things for my ſelf? (h)
'*At leaſt, have not I delighted too*
'*much in* a thing of nought (i) *in*
'*the Faſhions, Braveries, Pomps*
'*and* 5.

(h) Jer. 45. 5.

(i) Amos. 6.13

'*and Vanities of this wicked*
'*World? Wherenpon* I *may ſadly*
'*remember, but know not how to*
'*recover* all my pleaſant things
'which I had in the dayes of
(k) Lam. 1. 7. 'old. (k) *And have not* I *leaned,*
'*and laid too much weight upon*
'*the World, and thought with my*
'*ſelf (in theſe times of ſo great*
'*ſtraitneſs) ſure* I *ſhall do well*
'*enough, becauſe* I *have enough?*

4. Fourthly, Sabbath-ſlighting:
'*Have* I *given the Lord his due*
'*upon his Day? Or do not* I
'*(which is not only theft but ſa-*
'*criledge) take from him for my*
'*ſelf ſome part of his holy time?*
'*And that by worldly mixtures and*
'*medlies, whereby either the Ser-*
'*vice is hindred that* I *ſhould per-*
'*form, or that is mar'd that* I *do*
'*perform: No marvel therefore if*
'*the Lord have laid a mulct upon*
'*me*

'me on that day, for the ſinfull neg-
'lect of that day, and if I have not
'my own, becauſe God had not his
'own. Generally, Have not I read
'the Holy Scripture leſs then I
'ſhould, and therefore love and ad-
'mire it leſs then I ought? And
'hence all is worſe then it ſhould or
'would be.

Dear Chriſtians, Having written a Letter to you in ſo many words, let me requeſt you not to think them too many, nor that I am therein too buſie. As the Apoſtle ſaith, ſuffer the word of exhortation: (l) So I beſeech you my Bre- (l)Heb.13.22.
thren, ſuffer theſe words of Examination, nay, not only permit them, but purſue them; For how much better is it to ſearch throughly, and find out every Achan upon ſo heavy a Judgement, then by neglecting that, or doing it negligently, to ſend for an heavier? Third-

3. Thirdly, (*after the cauſe*) *The uſe of this, and the like fiery, or fire-like Judgements, remains to be conſidered.* It's *true, that Fire, when it is an inſtrument of Divine Juſtice, is a very dreadful and deſtroying thing, and for that reaſon is uſed to ſet forth the intollerable ſufferings of loſt ſouls in the place of torment: But yet fire hath divers natural properties or uſes, whereof a good uſe may be made; as namely, in that it* tryeth, purgeth, heateth, aſcendeth, enlightneth. (m)

(m) Iſa. 30. 33. Rev. 21. 8.

1. Firſt, It tryeth: *As Fire-ordeal in this Nation was heretofore a tryall for Adultery, under which Queen* Emma *came, and came well off*; Sir R. Bak. Chron. 1 D. p. 25. l. 18. *It tryeth* things, *as mettals, Gold and Silver; yea, and fire (or ſomething like fire) tryeth the Doctrines of Teachers,* (n) the fire

(n) 1 Cor. 3. 13

fire shall try (*saith the Apostle*) every mans work of what sort it is: *where, by* fire *may be understood, either the word of God, which is compared to fire,* (o) *or the spirit of God, which is a* Spirit of burning, *and is set forth by* Fire, (p) *or Affliction and Persecution, which is a* fiery tryal; *and so putteth Teachers to it, that there will be a distinction between golden and wooden Doctrines, that which is precious, and that which is curious, there being no such support under the weight of suffering, in and by the one, as by the other.*

(o) Jer. 23. 29.

(p) Isa. 4. 4. Mat. 3. 12.

It tryeth *persons also; it tryed the three Children, it tryed the Martyrs, it tryed* Job, *all whose tryal was as by fire, and fire was one part of his tryal,* (q) *wherein the Devils design was malitious, that is, to discover him to be*

(q) Job 1. 12.

droſs; but God's purpoſe gra-
cious, that is, to bring him forth
as Gold. (r) *Suffer me to ſpeak*
plainly: 'This fiery tryal will
'make thee (if thou be right) to
'ſearch into the cauſe of it; that,
'finding that out, thou mayeſt
'charge thy ſelf wiſely, and be
'far from charging God fooliſh-
'ly: (t) It will make thee ſearch
'into Gods Word, to find out
'the Leſſons thou art to learn by
'it, that they being learned, thou
'mayeſt be Bleſſed: (t) It will
'try thy Humility and Patience,
'whether thou wilt fall down at
'his feet and bleſſe him (as Job
'did) or fly in his face and Curſe
'Him, that is, have ſowre
'thoughts of him, when he hath
'conſumed thy Dwelling Place:
'It will try thy Piety and Since-
'rity, and whether thou ſerve
him

(r) Job 23.10.

(t) Job 1. 22.

(t) Pſal. 94.12

'him for an Hedge, for an House,
'and an House-full, or serve him
'still, though he hath torn the
'Hedge, and taken All from thee:
'Lastly, it will try thy Faith, and
'whether thou canst rest; not
'onely on a supplying, but on a de-
'stroying, yea, (as Job did,) (u)
'on a Slaying God. —— Let this
'Fire do its Office, that is, be unto
'thee a Trying Thing, and not only a
'Burning Thing; see that that do
'thee good, that hath done thee
'hurt.

(u) Job 13. 15.

Secondly, Fire Purgeth: (w) If 2.
thou be a Vessel of Honour, this
fire of Affliction, will so purifie
thee, as to make thee much more
meet for thy Masters use: (x)
Look on undone Job; The First
use his Great Lord and Master
meant to make of him, was to let
all the World, and the Devil (the

(w) Psal. 12. 6.

(x) 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21.

Friends of the World? know, that whatsoever God took from him, or laid on him, yet he would keep his Integrity still. This was done by his Affliction, as it was a trying fire: But then he was made meet for his Masters use again by his Affliction, as it was a purging fire; for before God had done with him, he was so purged of his Perturbations, Passions, Displicencies and Animosities, that unto the Integrity he had and held in the beginning of the Book, was added the great humility he had got, and shewed in the latter end of the Book. (y) Now hereby he was meet to be restored, and so also was of great use to his Great Lord; by whom therefore it is said, for the magnifying of his Pity and tender Mercy, and for the Comfort of his extreamly afflicted Servants to the

(y) Job 40. 3, 4. 5. and 42. 6

end

end of the World, Ye have seen (O my Dearly Beloved, and yet deeply afflicted People) the Patience of Job, and (also) have seen the end of the Lord; (z) that is, That the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more then his beginning. (a) 'Enquire diligently, '(O thou afflicted and tossed with 'several and sore troubles) Art 'thou more meet for thy Masters 'use by his sauere usager? is thine 'high heart fallen low, with the 'fall of thine high house? is thy 'worldly heart gone with thy 'worldly goods? so that thou canst 'say truly, and with a good Con-'science, I confess I was much car-'ried away with the lust of the 'eyes, (b) much taken and overtaken 'with the love of the World; but 'now by the grace of God, instead 'of embracing and hugging the

(z) Jam. 5. 11.

(a) Job 42.12

(b) 1 Joh. 2.16

(c) 2 Tim. 4 10
Heb. 11. 13.

(a) Job 42.12

3.

(d) Iob 42. 6.

mend.

mend. (e) Hast thou lost a better house? let there be a livelier course of service in the house thou hast. It's a poor house that hath no fire in it; no marvel if there be fire on it. Here also particular examination will be profitable. 'What? 'am I indeed more zealous for God 'then formerly (as the idle Child, 'after the rod, runs?) having less 'reading, and less left me to trade 'withal, do I drive a quicker 'trade in Religion? if I crept and 'crawled before, do I now run the 'way of Gods Commandments? 'Do I nothing, clearly a sin, shew it 'self in me or my Relations with-'out reprehension? Nor dulness and 'restiness in Religion without ex-'citation and exhortation? Is 'spending time in unprofitable Vi-'sits and flesh-pleasing company 'such an affliction to my spirit, as

(e) Rev. 3. 19.

is the careless loss of an opportunity, wherein I might have bought
up a gainful Commodity? (f) *Are*
idle and unprofitable words on one
side, and idle and unprofitable si-
lence on the other side, so displea-
sing to me, that I cannot endure ei-
ther to be a babler or a Mute? Is a
vain or heterogeneal thought in
prayer or other holy exercises, like
a thief in the candle, which though
it start up and fall in I know not
how, yet I cannot abide to have it
abide there? These things may be
judged by some, precisenesse: But is
not the way to heaven narrow? was
not the late fire big enough to heat
us in holiness? doth it not stand us
upon, after so dreadful a conflagra-
tion to be in the fear of the Lord all
the day long? (g) (*unto which all*
the former particulars, let them seem
as rigid as men please, are easily re-
ducible.)

(f) Eph. 5. 16.

(g) Pro. 23. 17.

ducible.) To shun what shall not a burnt child dread the fire? and the iron when it comes out of the hot fire, be hot it self, and he thereby fit to be wrought into any useful form?

Fourthly, Fire ascendeth: In which respect, this fire may mind us of two things; not to wonder at it; not to like our selves till we be like it. Not to wonder at it, or be taken with any uncomfortable and unprofitable amazement, (h) considering that man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward; yea, they that are new born, are born (often) to more outward trouble then others are, as Jeremy (i) was; This is not because the Lord doth not love them, but because he will magnifie his grace in them, when all shall see how much they can bear from God, without quarrelling with him. 4.

(h) Iosh. 7.10. Iob 5.7.

(i) Ier 15.10.

him. Hence God challenged the devil again and again, brought forth his Champion, permitted Satan to choose and manage the weapons with which he would fight, one after another; all which amount unto this, that some men are twice born to trouble, and by those that are twice born, all trouble will be less born. As fire assimulates all it lays hold on, and makes it like it self; so the fire of a great City makes but one great fire. So if God lay this fire (or any the like affliction) to us, it will make us more upward, more Godward from whom it comes; it will make us look above the world, look higher then a combustible house, and that house-hold stuff with which it is stuffed, and to set our affections from this day less on things below, and more upon things above. (k) Examine thy profiting by this property

(d) Job 7.10. Job 5.7.

(i) 1 Cor. 15.10.

(k) Col. 3.1.

perty of fire; Wilt thou never sacrifice to thy Net any more; whereby thou gettest so much in, (and its well if all be not fish that comes to the Net) that thereby thy portion is fat, and thy meat plenteous? (l) *Wilt thou never again lie groveling on this Earth as the Miser broods, atq; incubat auro, his money?) Whereas thou didst creep and crawl on the Earth like a Serpent, wilt thou now mount up with wings as the Eagle? Having thy conversation in heaven here where thou lookest for thine habitation hereafter?*

(l) Hab. 1. 18.

(m) Isa. 40. 31.

Fifthly, Fire enlightneth, *and by enlightning, guideth. As the same* pillar of cloud *that guided the* Israelites *in the day by its motion, was* a pillar of fire, *to guide them in the night by its light.* (n) *Beloved, we cannot*

5.

(n) Exod. 13. 21. and 14. 20.

cannot tell into what wilderness we may be brought, or what nights of adversity may come upon us for our highly aggravated sins; for after an hundred years Gospel-light, after most glorious deliverances, and many gracious and prosperous providences; after the shutting up of the late saddest civil war, and the reducing (by a miracle of mercy) a rightful Government among us; what hath followed, but multiplyed, propagated, and inevitable errour, a torrent of Prophaneness, and a spirit of Atheism in both, throughout the Land? and do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people and unwise? (o) No marvel therefore, if when we have rebelled against the Lord, and vexed his Spirit, he be turned our enemy and fight against us, (p) by Plague, Sword, and after both by this Fire. Now, when the angry

angry God hath fired upon us already, we know not how great a sight of affliction (q) *he further intendeth, and what more we may be put to endure from him that saith, when I begin, I will also make an end.* (r) *But yet, if we by the light and direction of this pillar-like fire that ascended so high Heavenward, find out and walk with fear and trembling in Gods way, either further judgement shall be prevented, or any judgement shall be better endured; for affliction facilitates affliction, and upon the same grounds of faith whereby we carry our selves like Christians under this trouble, we shall be able without dejectedness and despondency to bear any other, though far greater. As the least affliction needs divine comforts, so the same divine comforts exceed the greatest, and are more*

(q) Heb.10.32

(r) 1 Sam.3.12

more ready for use, because they have been used.

But (to conclude with more comfortable things) if this be a trying fire, and we be found Gold, a purging fire, and we be found purer, a heating fire, and we be found warmer and livlier, an heightning fire, making us to ascend as it self doth, (and as Elijah in a Chariot of fire did) higher and higher towards heaven, then will it be (to us) the happiest fire that ever was kindled; it will by the purifying and rectifying of our hearts, fortifie them against those more general possible fires which our sins give us so much occasion to fear, yea, and greatly secure us, and set us free from the fear of Everlasting Flames.

As they say of *Adams* sin, it was, *felix peccatum*, so this will be, *felix flagellum*.

This I have spoken to shew my own sense of this sad dispensation, as having a part in it, and I may say;

say, the sense of many others in the country, and more private places, who though they be far distant from, yet sympathize with that highly suffering City; or (if any be more secure) to bring them to a due sense of so great ruines, and thereby to an hope of reparation, which can never be comfortably expected till the soul (as the sore) have the dead flesh got out of it, and be brought to a quick sense of a judgment that hath made so quick work, and of the causes & bitter roots of such a judgement.

But whatsoever my meaning be, I know it is not easie for me to give an account of the largeness of this Epistle prefixed to so small a piece; All I shall say is, that so much was not at first intended. It hath grown under my hand, and that much more, by pressing the several parts, that they might take the faster hold on

several

several hearts, as much time is sometimes spent to get a Receipt taken. If it be too long for an Introduction, call it an Instruction, and look upon it, not only as a Preface to, but a part of, yea a summary of all I have to say upon the present sad subject.

Whatsoever it be, I do humbly and seriously commit it (with all that followeth after it) to the blessing of God, and unto that blessed God (to whom I am hastening) beg earnestly to be recommended in the Prayers of those that shall reap any benefit by such labours of Love.

And so Rest

Yours, and the Churches

Decem. 1. 1666. Servant, as I may

and while I am,

William Thomas.

THE

Lamentations

OF

JEREMY

Brought to preſent Uſe.

In brief Obſervations and Explications intermixed on the ſeveral Chapters and Verſes of that Book.

Pſal. 90. 11.

Who knoweth the power of thine Anger?

LONDON,
Printed for *John Sims*, 1667.

Lamentations

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER,

About the several parcels of this SMALL PIECE.

S for that which first appeareth, that is, that which is done upon the Book of the *Lamentations*, I shall easily grant to the intelligent Reader, that so excellent, and so affectionate a part

of Scripture, might have been, and deſerveth to be, much more exactly handled; And (to ſpeak more particularly)

1. *Firſt*, There might have been an accurate *Analyſis* of every Chapter; But of that, common Readers make not much uſe, and they that are more learned, have not much need; Withall, ſomething is done towards it, in the ſeveral, more plain diſtributions that are here to be found in each Chapter.

2. *Secondly*, And there might have been more ſatisfaction in

in a more Elaborate *Expoſition*; But that is to be expected from, and is for, ſuch as are more learned; what I have done is for learners: yet if the Scriptures cited in every Chapter, and alſo quoted in the Margent, be well ſearched, which the ſerious and *Berean* Reader, that loves Scripture, will take pains to do, (and I much deſire he would, ſince I have not had time to write out the words) it will be found, (I hope) that the Expoſition (wherein divers good Authors have been conſulted)

is not to be contemned. It's the Sun, and the glorious Sun-like Scripture, that gives the best light to see it self withall.

3. *Thirdly*, And larger and warmer *Observations* might have wrought more on the Affections: But it is tedious to the Aged to write much, and for persons that are imployed in their ordinary Callings, to read much: Moreover, it is to be hoped, that the *London-Fire* is not so put out, but that it will help to warm the Readers hearts.

Briefly

Briefly and plainly, This Book falling in by Providence to be read in order (in the ordinary courſe of Family-Duty) at that time when it pleaſed God to ſend that lamentable Fire, thereupon, the ſutableneſs of it to the preſent diſpenſation hath been a reaſon of paſſing through it with the more ſpeed, that it might be produced (if it would do any good; and if the things of Scripture will not do good, what will?) and might appear in a ſhorter time, and thereby, be ſent forth more

seasonably, before the sense of the hand of God be got out of our hearts.

Lastly, *The self same spirit divides to every man severally as he will*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Others have, and will write more largely, learnedly, and vigorously upon such a Subject: I shall bless God if any pains I have taken, conduce to a more profitable use of this part of Scripture, and to a better observing of that great work of Justice done so lately by so long a provoked God; and thereby, to the preventing of further Judgements,

ments, Or, if they ſhould not be prevented (for who knows what God hath purpoſed) yet, to the bearing of them with more humility, more faith, more fortitude, and more fruit.

As to the following *Queſtions*, they alſo were moved by occaſion of, and accordingly are ſuited to, the late (and which will be a long-laſting) ſad providence; wherein (to ſay no more) I hope the godly Reader will find ſo much of matter making for Inſtruction, Edification and Conſolation, as will

will be some access to his spiritual store, and excite him to pray for the much decaying Author, (for what else can there be expected at the Age of *Seventy Four?*) that his works may be (however less vigorous) yet some way, more and better at last then at first.

W. T.

OBSERVATIONS

On the

Lamentations of *Jeremy*.

CHAP. I.

He Prophet *Jeremiah* (if he could) would have prevented the ruine of the Church; but all endeavours being ineffectual, because carnal confidence is alwayes an enemy to faithful obedience; therefore nothing is left now but to Lament what cannot be help'd, which sad office *Jeremy* performeth in the name, and as the mouth of the whole desolated Church. This

This Task he undertakes for ſuch reaſons as theſe:

1. *Firſt*, To ſhew that he did not foretell thoſe grievous things that are now come to paſs, out of hatred or ill-will to his people, for then he would rather have rejoyced, as *v.* 21. at what was come to paſs, then thus lamented it; but out of duty to God he thundred out thoſe heavy Judgements which here he bewails out of pity towards them. A Miniſter muſt grieve for that miſery when it is come, which he threatens before it comes, and which he in a ſort, is ſaid to bring, *Jer.* 1. 10.

2. *Secondly*, Becauſe *Jeremy* from the deſcription of their doleful condition (wherein he ſuffers with them) would take occaſion the better to bring them to repentance for ſin the cauſe of it, and alſo to relieve them, and ſtrengthen their faith in hope of future mercy.

3. *Thirdly*, Having ſuch a thing as this to do, it was meet he ſhould begin with mourning, becauſe nothing will be well taken by thoſe that be in extream affliction, unleſs they diſcern in thoſe

thoſe that ſpeak it, a ſenſe of the extremities under which they groan——

This is the general Obſervations out of ſeveral Verſes.

Verſe 1, 2.

Sin brings the greateſt ſolitarineſs, ſervitude and ſorrow upon the moſt populous, free and joyous City.

Verſ. 2.

They that ſtrengthen and hearten others in ſin (as the Jewiſh Heathen-helpers did) are the furtheſt of all others from giving them comfort in their calamity. They bring them into the mire, (yea into Hell, as the Prieſts did *Judas*, *Mat.* 27. 3, 4.) and there they leave them, *Jer.* 38. 22,

Verſ. 3.

By *Captivity* is not meant the great Captivity, but that divers betook themſelves to a voluntary exile, becauſe of the oppreſſions of the enemy in their own Country, *Jer.* 40. 11. Its a ſad thing when there is no other choice, but either to endure the heavieſt

vieſt things among the people of God, or elſe to fly for ſhelter among ſtrangers and Pagans, where (in a great ſtorm) the rain will be ſtill dropping through.

Verſ. 4.

To be deprived of communion with God in the way of his worſhip, is the worſt, *Pſal.* 42. 4. and even the ſoul of the huge body of outward troubles; in which regard men had need to take heed how they riſe up againſt their Civil Governours, ſince the over-throw of the Common-wealth bringeth with it the over-throw of the Churches Peace.

Verſ. 6.

Her Princes are become like Harts, (1.) finding no Paſture, but being deprived of all that ſhould keep them in heart, they are (like a famiſhed, hunted Hart) weak, feeble, fearfull, and without any courage. When Magiſtrates and Miniſters, and the braveſt ſpirits are quail'd, its a very ſad judgement to people, for they ſhould encourage others, and any enemy will conquer

conquer a cow'd and hart-like, that is, an heartless people, *Josh.* 2.11.

Vers. 7,10,11. with *Jer.* 51. 34.

We use in adversity to remember the pleasant things (both outward, and spiritual, *Psal.* 42. 4.) which we enjoyed in prosperity; How much better is it to remember *the last end*, *Vers.* 10. and what sin will bring when God calls us to account, that so our pleasant things may be preserved? see *Deut.* 32.24. 2 *Sam.* 2. 26. *Jer.* 5. 31. Yet may this remembrance mind us to get those pleasant things that no enemy can take from us, *Mat.* 6. 19, 20. *Luke* 10. 42.

The Adversaries did mock at her Sabbaths. Its a certain sign that men are Enemies to God and Goodness, and all Gods People, when they mock at their Religion, or insult over them because of their misery, jearing them, as perhaps here they did, because their Land was depopulated, un-manured, and so had many dayes of rest, *Levit.* 26. 34.

Vers. 8.

Verſ. 8,9,11,17. with *Mic.* 4.11.

Sin, (that *filthineſs*, *Verſ.* 9. that filthy and deformed thing, *Jer.* 13. 26,27. and which alſo brings a ſhamefull and loathſome ſtate) this is it which lies at the bottom of all affliction, as the cauſe of it, *Jer.* 2. 17. And only prayer is left (which in no extremity ſhould be left) to keep the head above water, and the heart from deſpair.

Verſ. 12.

Men call in, and are glad of company in two caſes,

Firſt, When they do eminent and praiſe-worthy things, that they may be obſerved and eſteemed, 2 *Kings* 10. 15.

Secondly, When they ſuffer eminent evils, that they may be obſerved and pitied; And, its ſome eaſe to have our trouble look'd upon, and oft brings in relief, *Luke* 10. 33, 34. but the hiding of the face, adds to our torment, *Iſa.* 58. 7. *Pſal.* 142. 4. though there be alſo an evil and afflicting eye, *Micah* 4. 11.

See Jer. 15. 5.

Verſ. 12.

Verſ. 12, 13, 14, 15.

The Cauſe of their Affliction was confeſſed before, *v.* 8. and here they acknowledge the Author of it; It proceedeth all from an angry God, enforced by their ſin unto it: And ſo much of anger there is in it, as that it is like a fire *ſent into their bones*, that is, it is a judgement piercing their inward and ſtrongeſt parts — And like *a Net ſpread for their feet*, *verſ.* 13. wherewith men uſe to fly from trouble; — And like *a Toke*, *v.* 14. bound by the hand of Heaven upon their neck, which they cannot ſhake off; ſo wreathed alſo and twiſted are their tranſgreſſions (in the puniſhment of them) that there is no winding out of their necks from them, *Mich.* 2.3. Unto all which is joyned a *treading down* of all thoſe among them that ſhould be a relief and comfort unto them, *v.* 15, 19. *Iſa.* 51. 18, 19, 20. *O who knows the power of thine Anger? Pſal.* 90. 11. When the Lord will *command a judgement*, *v.* 17. and that in the higheſt degree, there is nothing that will amount to a counter-command.

Verſ. 18. *to the end.*

When God uſeth the greateſt rigour, yet grace ſaith, he is a righteous God, *Neh.* 9. 33. yea, faith ſaith further, that God will deal with the enemies of the Church for their ſin and cruelty, as he hath done with his Church for their ſin and impenitency; and therefore the Church prayeth accordingly againſt ſuch Enemies, which though they ought not to do, becauſe they are *their* enemies, yet they might do, becauſe, and as they were, *Gods* Enemies, and with a pure aime at Gods righting of himſelf.

Lamentat. II. Verſ. 1.

1. IN the Wilderneſs a Cloud covered them in mercy; in *Babylon*, in anger: Sin takes away all our ſun-ſhine, and caſts men down from Heaven to Earth, yea, to Hell, *Mat.* 11. 23. the higher they are ſet by the God of heaven, the lower they fall and are broken the more.

The

The Temple was Gods houſe, becauſe he dwelt in it, but his *foot-ſtool*, *Pſal.* 132. 7. alſo, becauſe they were to look above it, to that God with whom they had to do in all things done in it; Now when they ſtood ſtoutly, and lifted up themſelvs on the foot-ſtool, *Jer.* 7. 4. and forgot their God, God did forget and forego his foot-ſtool. If we reſt on the ſigns of Gods preſence that are before us, and forget the God that is above us, we looſe the ſigns, and the God both.

Verſ. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Men are hardly perſwaded, that the Lord doth thoſe deſtroying things, that deſtroying and malicious men do; therefore [*He*] is here ſo often mentioned; but unleſs we look unto him as the Author, and to men only as inſtruments in his hand, we ſhall never have the patience, nor do the duties we ought in trouble, nor get any grounded hope to get out of it. To what purpoſe is it to keep a ſtir with officers, when the buſineſs is between the King and us?

2. It's a great mercy of God to have *Habitations* for our uſe, and to put our heads into, and *ſtrong holds* for our ſafety, and *Princes* and potent perſons for our honour and *horn* to defend us, and oppoſe our enemies; but what mercy giveth, and ſin abuſeth, juſtice taketh away, and the fierce anger of God *ſwalloweth up, throweth down, polluteth and ſtaineth*, and quite *cutteth off*.

Verſ. 3.

It's a ſad thing when God *drawes back his hand* in the face of our Enemies, and leaves us to them to do what they will with us, *Judg.* 2. 14. *Neh.* 9. 28. but if we draw back, *Jer.* 2. 27. refuſe to hearken to God, and pull away the ſhoulder, no better is to be expected, *Zech.* 7. 11, 12, 13.

Verſ. 6.

The Lord takes away his Tabernacle, and ſo all defence, (*Pſal.* 27. 5.) as when an hedge, *Iſa.* 5. 5. is taken from a Garden, and then the wild Bore comes in; yea, God *cauſeth* not only meeting places for *Aſſemblies* to be

be destroyed, but removeth also, and powreth all contempt upon the most sacred ordinances, officers and orders of men in Church and State (though of his own institution) whereby we may see that the destruction of Church and State go together. Mans sin and Gods anger overturns all.

Vers. 7.

A wofull thing that enemies make an insulting and blasphemous noise for the Churches ruine, in the very same house of the Lord, wherein his People were wont to sound forth his loud praises for their preservation and prosperity: but thus will God throw down all his holy things, when they be not used for his holy ends.

Vers. 8.

All sad alterations of State arise from Gods purpose, *Jer.* 4. 28. whereby he makes such an utter and exact destruction (even as if he *stretched out a line*) that the *rampart and the wall* lament (as well as they can) the publick ruine; How much more the Daughter of *Zion*? *Vers.* 10.

Verſ. 9.

When the high and ſtrong Gates are thrown down, and with their weight and fall perhaps ſunk into the earth, then the enemy hath a free entry, and that's a miſery; but that not only they ſhould come in into the habitation of the people of God, but the King and Princes of that people be forced to live *among Gentiles* without Law, 2 *Chron.* 15. 3. and Ordinances, without *Prophets* or any Viſion from the Lord to comfort them, (and ſo it was in a great degree in the captivity, and between that and Chriſts coming, *Pſal.* 74. 9. *Mal.* 4. 4.) this is a miſery of miſeries: This Book muſt needs be called *Lamentations*.

Verſ. 11, 12.

The beſt Miniſters are the greateſt Mourners, they do even cry out their eyes, diſſolve and pour out their Liver and Entrals, and that for the ſin of Gods people firſt, *Jer.* 13. 17. and their miſery after. *Jeremy* and Jeſus weep over *Jeruſalem*, *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. eſpecially for the extremity of miſe-

ry,

ry, which is, when children (somwhat grown up) speak to their Mothers *for Corn and Wine*, and there's neither wine nor corn, nor a bit of bread; yea, when also the pitifull looks of starved sucklings upon the Mothers face (that can say onely, *If the Lord do not help, how shall I help?* 2 *Kings* 6.27.) I say, when the looks and cryes of very Infants speak loud in the Mothers ears; the most sad conclusion whereof is, that they *pour forth their souls into their Mothers bosome*; but this befalls them that do not only neglect and contemn, but oppose and withstand all those gracious means, whereby these dismal things might be prevented. It's much to know in this our day the things belonging to our peace.

Vers. 13.

What thing shall I take to witnesse for thee? That is, what is there that can be produced to testifie (for some comfort to thee, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. 1 *Pet.* 5.9. and some allaying of thy grief) that there is, or ever hath been such another case as thine is. As nothing

is like the Churches ſin, *Mat.* 11. 21, 24. *John* 15.22. ſo nothing is like the Churches Puniſhment, *Dan.* 9. 12. *Lam.* 4. 6.

Verſ. 14.

Wicked Prophets, and daubing Miniſters, that preach peace, when God ſaith, there is no peace, *Iſa.* 57. 20. are the great *cauſes* of the Churches undoing; not that people are thereby excuſed, for *they love to have it ſo*, *Jer.* 5. 31. but yet the Prophets are unanſwerably accuſed, becauſe they let people have what they love, and ſo bring upon them what they fear, and kill them with their curſed kindneſs.

Verſ. 15, 16.

The ſad geſtures, obſervations, and queſtions of thoſe that paſſing by *Jeruſalem* (utterly defaced) look upon it as the moſt horrid ſight; and withall, the baſe inſultings of malicious enemies, *v.* 16. (who when the Church mourns moſt, dance moſt) add much to the affliction of a moſt afflicted and undone people. Now the Pro-

Prophet doth not thus amplifie their misery to add to their grief (there was enough of that) but to quicken them by presenting their misery (to the utmost) to do their duty, and by setting the husks before them, to bring them to their Fathers house; for we are very quickly sad, but very hardly good.

Vers. 17.

God is never wanting in warnings; but when his words and warnings for a long time together are of no weight with a secure and careless people, they must then feel the weight of his hand; and when all the ways of mercy that he hath devised can do no good, he will fully perform all that he hath threatned and devised in a way of Justice: When God cannot get the glory of his Soveraignty by obedience, he will have the honour of his Justice by revenging all disobedience, 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. All shall be thrown down, rather then God will be put down.

Vers.

Verſ. 18, 19.

In all Afflictions that reach the heart, *Jer.* 4. 18. it's the heart that cryes firſt, and that cryes moſt, yea that cryes *in the beginning of the night watches*, *v.* 19. when men ſleep their firſt and ſoundeſt ſleep; yea, the heart cauſeth all other cryes and tears. If men will not obey from the heart, *Rom.* 6. 17. God will make their hearts to ake, and wake, and cry out night and day for the bitter fruits of their diſobedience.

Verſ. 20.

Gods Children commit their heavy caſes to his conſideration, *Pſal.* 25. 19. *Pſal.* 119. 153. and that upon the account of Covenant-Relation; They can ſay, not only, Lord, thou haſt done *this*, but *Lord conſider to whom thou haſt done this?* Iſa. 63. 18, 19, and 64. 9. Yet may God ſay to ſuch, not onely conſider what thou haſt done, but againſt whom thou haſt done it, *Jer.* 22. 26. *Mal.* 3. 13. *Pſ.* 51. 4. What hold is there in a Covenant, when men uſe their God they care not

not how? yet thereby some hope is left, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *Ezra* 10. 2.

Vers. 20, 21.

Shall the women eat their fruit? This mothers did in the siege of *Samaria*, 2 *Kings* 6. 26. and now in *Jeremy's* time, *Lam.* 4. 10. it is related also to be done in the last siege of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*; yea, when our days (though we live them out) be but an hand-breadth, *Psal.* 39. 5. here *Children of a span long*, and all the years they might have lived, are eaten up. This is a most horrible thing, and yet the sin that causeth it is more horrible, *Jer.* 2. 12, and 5. 30. Yea Infants have sin enough in them for all the misery that befalls them, *Psal.* 51. 5. *Rom.* 5. 14.

Vers. 22.

As God, when he was present with his people in mercy, called all their joyes together in their solemn meetings, *Deut.* 16. 14. *Neh.* 8, 9, 10, 12. So when he appeareth in judgement, he calleth *all their terrours*, *Jer.* 20. 3. together, so that not one shall be wanting,

wanting, (as 2 *Kings* 10. 19.) nor wanting at any time, *Deut.* 28. 66, 67 —— It's a double misery to be under the torment of what we feel, and of what we fear; but security and no fear, bringeth the greatest fear, 1 *Thes.* 5. 3.

Lament. III. Vers. 1.

SOmetimes *Jeremy*, representing the Church, speaks as a woman, *Lam.* 1. 2,--6. and here as *a man*, for the Church is one body, and as one man; as at other times, in their conflicts, *Judg.* 20. 11. so at this time, in their complaints. They that are united in provocations, *Isa.* 9. 17. *Jer.* 5. 1. are united in Lamentations.

Vers. 2.

Sometimes Gods People have *darkness, but not light*, that is, great affliction without the mixture of any sensible comfort, *Isa.* 50. 10. For sometimes a mother mars a Childs correction, by kissing it between while,

Vers. 3.

Verſ. 3.

All the miſery of the Church is aſcribed to God, for he is the Author of it, *Iſa.*45.7. and preſented to God, for he only can give relief, and He in his good time will give relief in it, *Hoſ.* 6. 1, 2.

Verſ. 4, *&c.*

Behold, how affectionate and witty we are in amplifying Gods angry dealing with us; yea, he will have it ſo, that we may ſee with a deep ſenſe, how ugly a thing ſin is in the looking-glaſs of divine wrath and judgement, making the Church (the man, *v.* 1.) an old and altogether broken man, *v.* 4.

Here is therefore the juſt Lord ſet forth, as one that doth— 1. *Build againſt them*, and raiſe ſuch works and ramparts as they cannot reſiſt, *v.* 5. 1.
—2. That doth *hedge them about*, and hem them in that they cannot eſcape; encloſed they are as with the ſtrongeſt *hewen ſtones their paths are crooked*, and all runs croſs to their expectation, *v.* 7, 9— 2.
— 3. That having 3.

ing got them thus within his power, (like the lurking *Lion*) he maketh them his prey, *pulls them in pieces* all wayes, whereby such evils might be turn'd aside, being *turned away*, *v.* 10, 11. —— 4. That (as an Archer) makes them *as a mark*, and shoots his arrows into their entrails, *v.* 12, 13. O how terrible is God in the day of his anger, and the way of his judgements even to his own people? and yet it's like that flesh mixeth it self, and that there is something more then should be in these so dismal descriptions. 4.

Vers. 8.

Sometimes the People of God *cry and shout*, and yet he *shuts out their prayers*, *Psal.* 22. 1. and 80. 4. not letting them in, so as to give any present answer, by altering their sad condition; for if Children might escape correction by crying and shouting, they would never be corrected, *Prov.* 19. 18.

Vers. 14.

Old friends deride the desolated Church,

Church, yea their own people (ſure we find ſuch uſage of *Jeremy*, *Jer.* 20. 7. himſelf) thoſe of them (at leaſt) that were fallen to the *Chaldæans*, *Jer.* 38. 19. *Obad.* 12. Gods Children muſt learn to look for their comfort, not from their people and country-men, but from their God, *Pſal.* 31. 12. and 69. 12, 13.

Verſ. 16.

As little gravel-ſtones, hid in meat, break the teeth, ſo when the Church would fain feed upon ſome comforts in the extremity of their grief, they meet with Gravel. It's a ſad thing, when in a grievous condition, all our comforts are *greety* comforts.

Verſ. 19. 20.

If Sin be as honey to us, we muſt remember that puniſhment will be as wormwood, and we ſhall dwell upon the bitterneſs of the wormwood, and take our fill of it as we have done of the ſweetneſs of the ſin: And yet, as we ſhould not keep ſin as a ſweet morſell under our tongue, ſo we ſhould not alwayes chew the pill, and

pore

pore on the punishment, for that will bow the soul even unto the ground, *Psal.* 35. 14. and 38. 6.

Ver. 21.

The Prophet seems to speak to this sense. Albeit the state of things be thus exceeding sad, so that when I think thereof, my soul is bowed down, and brought exceeding low, *v.* 20. yet returning my heart back, 1 *Kings* 8. 47. calling my thoughts another way, and setting other things in the ballance against the things formerly related and heaped together, *I have hope*; even *This*, that is, the misery before mentioned gives in some hope, because God helps at a dead lift, and when things be at the worst, *Psal.* 12. 5. *Isa.* 52. 5, 6. *Jer.* 50. 33, 34. but *This*, that is, the considerations which follow after, *v.* 22, *&c.* open a wide door of hope. Consideration, and the collecting of our thoughts to God, and the Rule, set the soul right, and give in light, *Psal.* 77. 5, to *v.* 13, and 143. 5. Ministers when they have spoken terrour most, must not omit to teach faith, and hold forth

forth matter of hope, *Ezra* 10. 2. opposite to things depressing the heart to despair. Troubles are like nettles, touch them lightly and they sting; gripe them in the hand of faith; see what may be said on the other side, and the grief will be less.

Vers. 22.

Gods constant mercy and compassion is the great soul-raising consideration, whereof there is this evidence to support our faith, that tho' the Bush burn, and the Church be in the fire, yet it is not consumed, *Ezra* 9. 14. Mal. 3. 6. Psal. 103. 17. Dan. 9. 9.

Vers. 23.

As there is a new light every morning, so there is new mercy after the darkest night of adversity, *Esther* 8. 16. yea, it must be so, because Gods faithfulness fails not, but will be greater and more eminent in the performing of his promises, then the greatest afflictions, and the darkest providences are or can be, *Ezek.* 36. 11. Hos. 6. 3. Psal. 30. 5.

Verſ. 24.

Propriety is the prop of the afflicted ſoul, that is, the having of a part in God; and the feeling of our having a part in him ſettled in the heart, is the firm earth, wherein that hope is faſtened, which is the ſouls anchor, and without which the heart would break.

Verſ. 25, 26.

The Soul that is good, and to which the Lord will be good, is the ſoul that waiteth for Gods ſalvation, and that with patience, *Pſal.* 40. 1. *Iſa.* 26. 9. and perſeverance, till his time to ſave be come; And which *ſeeketh* God (notwithſtanding) in the uſe of all good means, to find and enjoy him as ſoon as may be, *Iſa.* 8. 17, and 26. 8, 9. *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Hoſ.* 5. 15. *Jer.* 29. 12, 13.

Verſ. 27, to *v.* 31.

Here may be obſerved the means, and the meaſure of patient waiting.

1. 1. The means] and that is, to conſider that it is not onely a ſad thing, but a good

good thing to bear the yoke, not only of doctrine, but of diſcipline and ſuffering, *Pſal.* 88. 15. and 119. 71. eſpecially *in youth*, and when we are moſt like untamed Steers, *Jer.* 31. 18, 19. In age the yoke is beſt endured, by being inured to it in youth. It's *Tribulation that worketh patience*, *Rom.* 5. 3. —— 12. The meaſure of it] Patience, and a great meaſure of patience is evidenced. — 1. If a man *ſit alone* under the mighty hand of God with ſilence and ſubmiſſion, *Lev.* 10. 3. *Pſal.* 39. 9. and do not run about raging, *Iſa.* 8. 21, and 57. 20. but grow more patient in bearing the yoke by bearing it, *Job* 34. 31. — 2. If he *put his mouth in the duſt*, that is, uſe all means to reſtrain himſelf, making it his only buſineſs in an hopeleſs condition, to ſee whether any hope will at length appear — 3. If (without making a ſtir) he give way to the worſt things, and baſeſt uſages, *Iſa.* 50. 6. till better things come, 2. 30.

1.

2.

3.

Verſ. 31. to *v.* 39.

There followeth now an Encouragement to this patient waiting in

hope of future good, (*viz.*) 1. Because, tho' the Lord cast down long, yet he will not *Cast off for ever*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *Ps.* 77. 7. *Ps.* 94. 14, 15.—
2. 2. Because, tho' he *cause grief*, *v.* 32. because of the multitude of our sins, *Jer.* 30. 15. yet he will have compassion, because of the *multitude of his mercies*, *Psal.* 51. 1. — 3. Because, it goes against him to afflict and grieve the Children of Men, much more those men that are his Children, *v.* 33. see *Isa.* 28. 21. *Hos.* 11. 8.
4. *Isa.* 63. 9. *Judges* 10. 16. — 4. Because He doth never approve, nor will alwayes endure, that men that are *Prisoners*, *v.* 34. and straitened already, should be altogether *crushed* and trodden under foot (tho' he himself have a just hand in it.—) Nor that men should be *turned aside from their right* before his face who is *most high*, or before the face, and by the power of Superiour powers, and the great oppressors of the world, *v.* 35. — or that they should be *subverted in their* righteous *cause*, *Jer.* 50. 33, 34. tho' he bring them very low, and that very long for their unrighteous

righteous courſes, *v.* 36.—— 5. Becauſe nothing comes to paſs, whether *evil or good*, but according to Gods counſel and command; and therefore no Tyrants can do more then he gives them leave, and order to do for his own glorious ends, *v.* 37, 38.

Verſ. 39, *&c.*

After the grounds of faith and hope, there followeth a direction how to behave our ſelves in our ſaddeſt condition, conſiſting of two parts:

Firſt, We are not to complain over- 1.
much, to vex and *tormoil* [*Orig.*] our ſelves with our troubles.

Verſ. 39.

1. Thou art but *a man*; and why 1.
doth the clay wrangle with the Potter?—— 2. And a *ſinfull man*; and why doſt thou think much to eat of the fruit of thy own way? *Jer.* 2. 17, 18.—— 3. And *a living man*; and why then ſhouldeſt thou murmure, when it is the mercy of the Lord thou art not conſumed? *v.* 22. why doſt thou repine at moderated judgement?

2. *Secondly*, On the contrary, we are to betake our selves to our duty, which is——

Vers. 40, 41.

1. *To search*, (not our woes only, and the bitterness of our affliction, wherein we use to be very exact, but) *our wayes*, and wandrings —— 2. To turn to the Lord in a way of repentance and faith, *Joel* 2. 12, 13. —— 3. To exercise our faith in *heart*, and faithfull prayer, being quickened thereunto by *lifting up our hands* heaven-ward.

Vers. 42.

The best way wherein to describe and amplifie our afflictions, is by weaving them within the candid confession of our sins; set that before, and then thou mayest better set forth thy troubles in their fulness.

Vers. 42, to *v.* 48.

After confession of Rebellion, here followeth a confession of the punishment of that Rebellion in many particulars.

1. *Thou*

and *Thou hast not pardoned* or spared, *v.* 42. Thou that art greatly afflicted mayest say so, but then add this to it, *My God punisheth me less then my iniquities deserve*, Ezra 9. 13.—— 2. *Thou hast covered* (all over) *with anger*.—— 3. *And persecuted us*, that is, God so follows the sinner, that he cannot escape any more, then he that is most persecuted, and most hotly pursued, see *Job* 19. 22.—— 4. *Thou hast not pitied*; for *fooliſh pity ſpoils the City*, and mars Gods work of juſtice, *v.* 43.—— 5. *Thou covereſt thy ſelf* (who art ſtill in thy ſelf the ſame Sun) *with a cloud* (raiſed by our ſin) ſo thick, *that our prayers cannot paſs through*, ſo as to procure any preſent relief, *v.* 44.—— 6. We are under the utmoſt reproach; and while fear forceth us to flee, we fall into the pit, and there ſtick, into the ſnare, and there are caught and cut off, *v.* 45, 46, 47.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

Verſ. 48, 49.

The eye is the heart-affecting ſenſe, and that with much ſorrow; becauſe the ear hath not affected the heart be-

before, when those threatnings have been denounced; whereby such judgements might have been prevented; hence *Rivers of tears* are still running, *because of* (saith the Prophet) *all the Daughters of my City*, that is, for their misery (as *v.* 48.) and *Chap.* 2. 21. or *more* [*Margent*] *then* of all the Daughters of my people, who yet take heavy things to heart most tenderly, and are most moved with sad sights.

Vers. 50.

We must look up, and hold out, for tears will never be wiped away, till *God look down from Heaven*, and then they will.

Vers. 52, 53, 54.

There are three things that trouble us much. 1. The most causeless troubles; when we are hunted as a Bird is by the Fowler, and have no way deserved it from those that so chase us, 1 *Sam.* 20. 8. *Psal.* 7. 3.— 2. The hardest sufferings, as to be put into a *Dungeon*, or a *Den*, *Dan.* 6. 17. with a stone upon it to prevent any

any coming out, *Josh.* 10. 18. *Jer.* 37. 16, and 38. 9. ——— 3. The highest sufferings, which amount to an utter *cutting off*, *Isa.* 38. 28. Write on the head of all these lamentable things, *We have transgressed, and have rebelled, v.* 41.

Vers. 55, 56.

Gods Children do not only cry out in the Dungeon, because of their sad condition there, *v.* 53, 54. but also they pray, *Acts* 16. 25. in the Dungeon, and cry upward to God, (*Psal.* 130. 1. (because of their faith; tho' there be never so great a distance between the lowest Dungeon and the highest Heavens; yea, tho' waters *flow over their heads*, *v.* 54. and there be as great a distance as between Hell and Heaven; as we see, when *Jonah* was in his deepest Dungeon, *Jonah* 2. 2. Of these Prayers, God is an ear-witness, whereupon they desire in faith, that God would not hide his face, nor be deaf to the breathings of their spirits, and Gods spirit, *v.* 56. The deepest Dungeons of Gods faithfull Servants do not dam up, or cause

cause a damp upon their prayers, but cause them to pray the louder to that God that hears them there, yea, that hears them most there, *Acts* 16. 26.

Vers. 57, 58.

Either these words are spoken in faith, as being assured, God will do what is here said, and what he hath said, *Jer.* 50. 34. as sure as if it were done already; or else out of the experience of what God hath done formerly in sad cases, whereby faith is strengthened in present troubles, and breaketh forth in more earnest prayers for future comfort, *Ps.* 27. 9. *Isa.* 51. 9. However, we see here, that when in the day of our distress we call upon God with faith (tho' with many fears) and with a good conscience and a good cause, when others wrongfully seek our lives, then God *draws neer*, (Faith sets the Lord alwayes before us, so that *he stands at our right hand*, Psal. 16. 8.) and is as really present with us for our support, as if he said from heaven in our ears, what he saith in his word, *Fear not*, *Isa.* 41. 10. *Psal.* 34. 4. He pleads

pleads also, by favourable things to us, and terrible (*Psal.* 65. 5.) things to our enemies, *the causes of our soul*, and redeems us when enemies would rid the world of us, *Jer.* 38. 4. *Esther* 3. 6.

Vers. 59. to *v.* 64.

This is a great stay to Gods shaken Church and People, that God sees their *wrongs*, for what God doth justly, *Neh.* 9. 33. that enemies do most unjustly, *Jer.* 51. 34. 35. 36. all whose *reproaches* therefore, all whose *imaginations*, all whose plots, *devices*, and *whisperings*, *verse* 62. 2 *Kings* 6. 12. *Acts* 4. 15. *Psal.* 83. 3. 4. 5. and how, in whatsoever posture they be, whether *sitting down* to devise, *Mic.* 2. 1. or *rising up* to act and execute their designs, yet still the Churches misery is their *musick*; all these things I say, the great God, that as a witness exactly observes, will as a *Judge* *v.* 59. severely punish, and *take vengeance in his Churches behalf*, *Jer.* 51. 36. for all enemies *vengeance*, *v.* 60. recompencing like with like, *Jer.* 50. 15. vengeance with vengeance.

Vers. 64.

Verſ. 64, 65, 66.

It is not unlawfull to put up againſt the Churches, and Gods enemies, the moſt dreadfull prayers ſutable to the nature and merit of their moſt wicked works, *Pſal.* 28. 4. for the Church hath a promiſe, that God will ſo deal with them, *Ier.* 50. 15, and 51. 24. and where there is a promiſe, we may make a prayer agreeable to that promiſe, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. But becauſe we eaſily err in this caſe, therefore we muſt remember, that ſuch imprecations are to be directed to God againſt them:

1. — 1. As they are the proud enemies of God himſelf, *Ier.* 50. 29.—
2. 2. And with reſpect to the glory of
1. God in the manifeſtation — 1. Of his Power for his Churches Redemption, when enemies think to hold them faſt, *Ier.* 50. 33, 34. *Iſa.* 49.
2. 24, 25, 26. *Pſalm* 83. 18.— 2. Of his Juſtice, that he may be known to be, *a God of Recompences*, *Ier.* 51. 35,
3. 36--- 56. — 3. Of his Mercy, in freeing his people from oppreſſion and miſery, *Jer.* 33. 11. *Ezra* 9. 8, 9---

4. Of

4. Of his truth and righteousnes in performing his promises, *Psalm* 37.6. and 94. 9. 15. and *bringing forth his Churches righteousnes*, *Ier.* 51. 10. Generally, they that make such sad Prayers, should see that they be able to say, (as *Job* doth) *my Prayer is pure*, *Job* 16, 17, 18. not onely from injustice, but from wrath, revenge, impatience; from all carnal passions, and self-seeking passages. Then shall these heavy prayers be so heard, and the malicious and implacable enemies of the Church be so *Persecuted*, *Psal.* 83. 15. by an angry God, that they shall not be able to find any shelter or safety from the hand of the Lord, *under the Heavens of the Lord*, Psal. 8. 3. 4.

Lam. IIII. Vers. 1. to *v.* 9.

1. HEre is set before our eyes the extreamly sad changes, and deformities that (more deformed) sin brings with it, and the tail it draws after it: For—— 1.

1. It makes the most golden things that shine most gloriously, yea, the most 1.

most pure and resplendent Gold of the Temple, to become a *dim* and defaced thing; yea, and the holy stones of the Temple being broken, and turned to rubbish, to be thrown about the streets, *v.* 1.

2. 2. Not only golden buildings, but golden builders, *Psal.* 118. 22. and Rulers, that had the most glorious lustre, *Psalm* 45. 13. *Acts* 10. 21. become like *Earthen Pitchers*, which the Potter works to any fashion, makes, mars and breaks, as himself pleaseth, *v.* 2.

3. 3. It brings, and forceth women, by a kind (and great degree) of necessity, to more then brutish cruelty, so that the *Sea-monsters* supply their young better then they do or can, for want of sustenance. —— Or, if they be like any unreasonable and unnaturall creature, it is like the *Ostrich*, that leaves, forgets, and harden her heart against her young ones, as if they were not her own, *Job* 39. 13, to 18. Hence the tongue of the poor sucklings *cleaveth to their mouth* for want of meat and moisture, *v.* 3, 4.

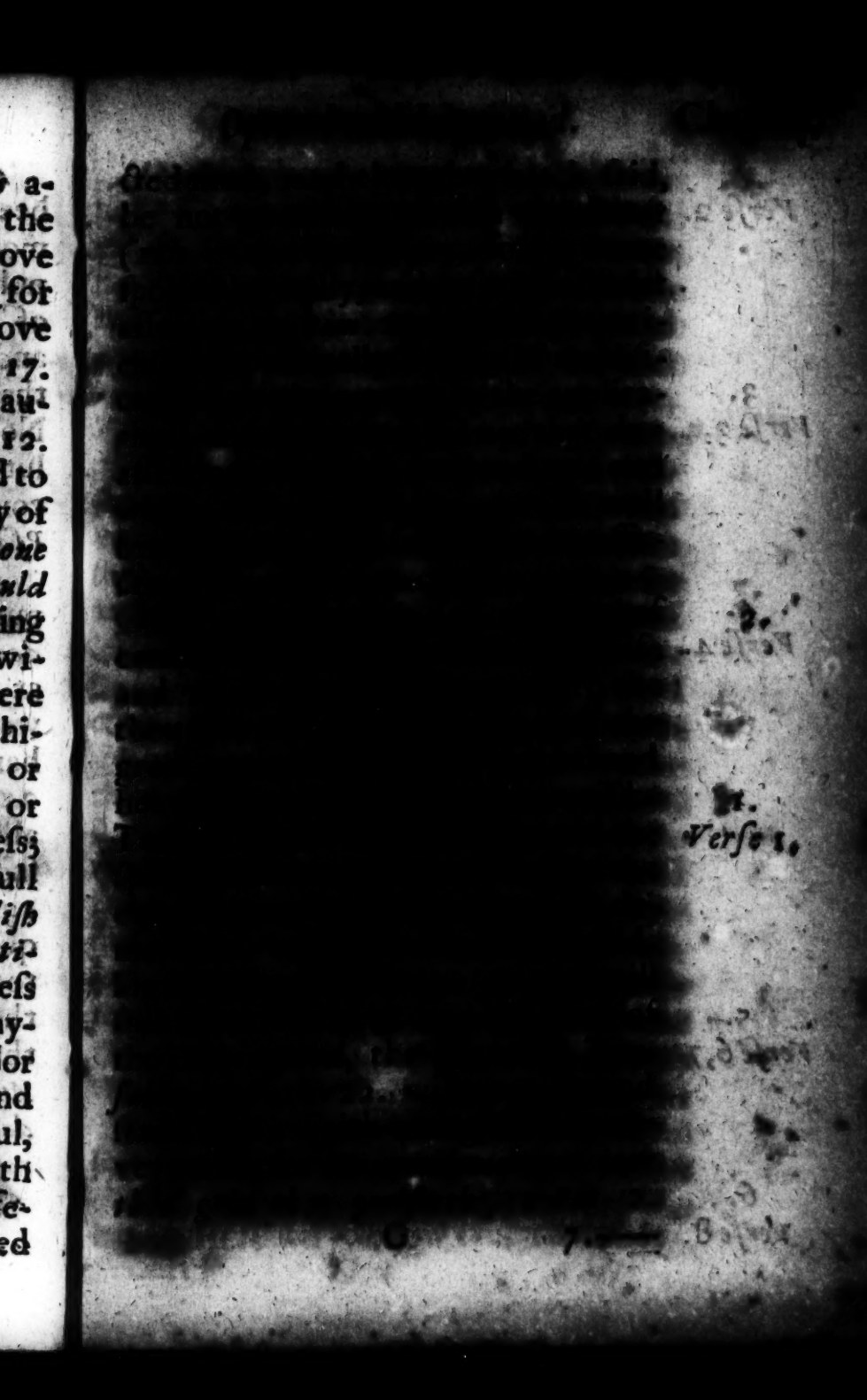
4. It

4. It makes them whose dyet hath been most delicate, and cloathing most costly, to lye *in the streets* in publick view, *desolate* and destitute of necessary succour and sustenance; and brings them down to Dung-hills that have been *brought up in Scarlet*: Now to *imbrace Dung-hills*, is to salute, and take acquaintance to, and come to close with the lowest Estate, *Psal.* 113. 7. *Job* 24. 8. 4.

5. It brings upon the Church a punishment greater then that of *Sodom* (so famous for the horrour of it) at least in this respect, that *Sodom* was dispatched quickly by a divine hand; no hand of Cruel Men, 2 *Sam.* 24. 14. was laid upon her, no hand at all *stayed* upon her, but in *a moment* she went down to her grave, *Job* 21. 13. There is something of relief by a quick riddance, but its a wofull thing to be still on the Rack. As the sin of the Church is more intollerable then that of *Sodom*, *Ezek.* 16. 51, 52. *Amos* 3. 2. So the judgement of *Sodom*, both is, *and shall be more tollerable*, then that of the Church, *v.* 6. *Abused mercy greatens misery.* 5.

6. It

6. 6. It hath made the *Nazarites* among the Jewes, that were for the purity of their complexion above *the ſnow*, *Rev.* 1. 14. above *milk* for their whiteneſs and fairneſs, above *Rubies*, for their ruddineſs, 1 *Sam.* 17. 42. and every way comly and beautifull, like the *poliſhed Pſal.* 144. 12. *Saphire*, yet to be ſo far changed to the contrary, that (as we uſe to ſay of them that are ſtrangely altered) *one would not know them, if they ſhould meet them in the ſtreet*, they being now more black then *a cole*, and withered like *a ſtick*, *v.* 8. They were not (we may think) abſolutely whiter and clearer then ſnow or milk, or before Rubies in a comly redneſs, or (afterward) above coles in blackneſs; but this may ſhew, that it is lawfull (as one hence obſerves, an *Engliſh* nameleſs Author on the *Lamentations*, Printed *Anno* 1599.) to expreſs the extremity of any thing with hyperbolical ſpeeches, *Iohn* 21. 25. Nor is it onely lawfull (becauſe we find much of it in Scripture) but needful, that we may be more affected with that with which we ought to be affected



2.
Verse 2.

3.
Verse 3,4.

4.
Verse 4.

5.
Verse 6,7.

6.
Verse 8.

great decay[illegible] their spiritual pu-
rity and [illegible] never so [illegible]
bu[illegible] that [illegible]
m[illegible] with [illegible]
ly[illegible] wh[illegible]

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it only [illegible]
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stich[illegible]
th[illegible]
is [illegible]
[illegible]
la[illegible]
d[illegible]
a[illegible]
to[illegible]

Vers. 10.

[illegible]
see[illegible] children with their
own [illegible] and make them their
meat! Here we see how true that is,

a Mother may forget, Isa. 49. 15. but it is as true, that *God will not forget*, and that must comfort us; for, a famishing misery works out [illegible] pity.

[illegible]

The Lord [illegible] in [illegible] sir[illegible] his the [illegible] con-sider[illegible] left [illegible] a new [illegible] Re-lig[illegible] [illegible] cou[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Sci-tu[illegible] strong by its [illegible] 5. 9. and [illegible] still by [illegible] 19. 34. [illegible] new what [illegible] would [illegible] have thought that any enemy [illegible] have been able to have [illegible]

Incredible are the [illegible] that come upon the Church of God, shewing, even to Heathen Kings and Princes;

Princes, yea, to those mighty powers that enter *Jerusalem*, that they come not from men, (it was too much for them to do so much) but from the hand of God himself, *Nebuchadnezzar*, Captain of the Guard brings it all to this; *Now the Lord hath brought it*, and instead of saying, it is because of our strength, he addeth; *because ye have sinned against the Lord*, Ver. 40. 3.

Vers. 13.

It was the [illegible] generally of all, that sinned [illegible] 9. 7, 11. but it is charg'd upon the Prophets, that should have taught them better; that in stead of that, were most chief and eminent in sin themselves, *Jer.* 5. 30, 31, and 29. 11. Yea, that were the leaders of the people into sin, for from them *prophaneness went forth into all the Land*, Jer. 23. 16. Yea, and cruelty also, and that blood that is here spoken of; for Priests and Prophets stirred up the people to shed innocent blood, *Jer.* 26. 8, 11. *Mat.* 27. 20.

Verse 14.

In this, and the next verse is a further declaration of the sin of Priests and People, and a prosecution of the charge of blood and bloody sin, as the cause of their captivity.

They, that is, the fore-named Prophets and Priests have wandred *like blind men* in the streets, being indeed blind themselves, and leading the People hood-wink't, *Isa.* 42. 18, 19, 20. *Hos.* 4. 6. *They have polluted themselves with blood*, Ezek. 22. 6, 7. 25, 26, 27, 29. *Hos.* 4. 2. and with all kind of sin, (*Ezek.* 16. 6. *Joel* 3. 21.) for all wickedness ariseth from blindness, *Ephes.* 4. 18, 19. and together with themselves, they have polluted the people, see *Ezek.* 22. 6. *&c.* Hence there was such a general defilement, that one could not touch them, but they must be defiled; yea, that one could not *but touch* [*Margent*] the defiled, because there was so much defilement.

Others understand it thus, *They have wandered as blind men*, that is, the pollution was so general, that they

they could no more avoid defilement, then a blind man that walks in the streets can avoid annoyances, or could avoid without help, that legal defilement.

Verse 15.

1. Some apply this to enemies, who said to the Jews in scorn, *Ezek.* 22. 4, 5. and detestation, when (by their enforcement) they fled away and wandred. Be gone, *ye polluted*; you shall sojourn no longer in that Land and City which you have so much defiled, we'll find out another place for you; And perhaps God might put this into the mouths of enemies for their greater regret, as the Captain of the Guard was to some their Preacher, *Jer.* 40. 2. 1.

2. Others carry on this verse with the former, as speaking of, and spoken by the same persons, and polluted body of the Jews, into this sense. As the Lepers in the Law were to cry, (that none might come neer them) *unclean, unclean*. Depart, keep off, touch not, *Hab.* 2. 13. so *they*, in this polluted City *cryed out*, that 2.

is, they had cause enough in imitation of the Lepers, to cry out, and perhaps, some out of the conviction of their consciences (in the height of their troubles) might cry out, *depart ye*, we and the City are wholly unclean, and the City is unclean, by the blood we have shed, *touch not*, for then you will be defiled; this they might say, *when they fled away, and wandred*, driven by the enemy: No marvel, if when their sin and filthiness was such, as to give just cause to say, *depart*, they were forced to depart and wander in unknown Countryes. This was no more then God (in expres words) threatned and foretold, *Micah* 2. 10. *Ezek.* 22. 13, 15, 16. *I will consume thy filthiness out of thee*, (by consuming thee, and carrying thee from thine own Country) *and thou shalt take thine Inheritance in thy self* (reflecting on thy self as a prophane people) *in the sight of the Heathen*: Prophane with prophane, *procul ite profani*. Upon the former things, *they said among the Heathen*, that is, the Heathen themselves said, or the Godly Jews among

the

the Heathen said, namely, to, or of the ungodly company yet left in the Land, *Jer.* 24. 5, 8, 9, 10. *They shall no more sojourn there.* Certainly God will cast them out.

What ever difficulty there be in these two verses, yet this they come to for the substance, to wit, that their pollution caused their perdition, *Isa.* 64. 6. and their cruelty, their captivity, *Ezek.* 22. 13, 15.

And so it shall be, so it ever will be with a pertinaciously sinfull and unclean people, whom their sin and filthiness dispossesseth of all their enjoyments, and causeth them to be cast out as filthy things are, *Hos.* 8. 8. into some loathsome place or other.

Verse 16.

They shall no more sojourn there (to be sure.) No, *the anger of the Lord hath divided them*; scattered and dispersed them in divers Countries, and (as it were) rid himself of them, as men do of that which they throw away, *He will no more regard them*, who no more regarded him and his Covenant, *Heb.* 8. 9. No marvel then

if

if men, if enemies regarded them not; no not the persons of the *Priests* and *Elders*, *Lam.* 5. 12.

They that are conjoyned in sin, are divided by judgement, *Hos.* 4. 16. as Princes scatter Rebells, or banish them some into one desolate Country, and some into another. And they that despise God, shall be lightly esteemed, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. No mans place or quality will priviledge him; God sets awork (to punish a rugged and refractory People) rough and regardless instruments that are all for destruction, without any distinction.

Isa. 3. 5.

Verse 17, 18, 19.

See here the state of a sinful People pursued by the anger of a just God: —— 1. They are disappointed of all help from their friends, *Isa.* 30. 4. 7. and 57. 13. —— 2. They are hunted by their enemies, and so are neer *their end*, as the hunted beast is, *Amos* 8. 2. —— 3. Especially it is so, when they are pursued by the swiftest persecutors, and most watchfull enemies, *v.* 19.

Isa. 31. 2, 3.

When God will destroy a people,

Friends

Friends are false and feeble, and Enemies are strong and active; for when men get friends that they may forget God, and be wicked and safe both together; such friends fight against an angry God, and their enemies fight for him, that is, for his ends, though that be not their end, *Jer.* 37. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Verse 20.

This may not be meant of *Josiah*, in whose time war was not intended against the state, nor did the King of *Egypt* after his Conquest, make any hostile approach unto the City, nor did the Kingly Government cease when *Josiah* was slain; nor were there any pits made, or snares laid for him, but a fair warning given him to forbear that which brought him to his end, 2 *Chron.* 35. 21, 22. More probably therefore this is to be applyed to *Zedekiah* their last King, who though he were but a bad King, yet the people drew life and breath from him, they were at that sad time, animated by him, and had hope of shelter and succour from him, as being

the

the Lords annointed, and being of *David's* Race, in whose house their hopes were laid up, 2 *Kings* 19. 34. yea, though many of their brethren were scattered *among the Heathen* already, and they were all in danger of a farther dispersion, yet they were not without hope (while they had a King) of a recollection; a King being an Head, under whom People are gathered together, *Hos.* 1. 11. But *Zedekiah* being taken in the enemies pit, and pursuit, all their hope was taken away.

In how sad case are people without a King, without a Governour, without a Government, even like a living creature that lacks breath? *Hos.* 3. 4. yea, if they fear not God, in how sad case are they, though they have a King? *Hos.* 10. 3. 1 *Sam.* 12. last; blind *Zedekiah* (for he was blind, *Jer.* 38. 18, 19, 22. before he was blind by the King of *Babel*) led the blind Jewes (yea they also led him) to stand it out against all the convictions of *Jeremiah*, and so both of them fell into the pit together.

Verse

Verse 21.

Rejoyce O Edom, as *Eccles.* 11. 9. O enemies (set forth by *Edom*, as one of the most virulent of them, *Psal.* 137. 7. *Obad. verse* 12.) It must be so if God will have it so, use us at your pleasure while we are in your power; but remember your turn also shall come to drink, and be shamefully drunk with the cup of Divine Judgement, *Isa.* 51. 22. 23.

Verse 22.

When God hath accomplished his works of Judgement on *Zion*, there's an end of their misery, but *Edom's* sin shall be so discovered, as that their state shall not be recovered, *Isa.* 26. 14. 21. The punishment of the Church is like that of *Babylon*, that ended in seventy years; but the Judgement of enemies, is like that in Hell, which begins here, and is never ended, see *Isa.* 40. 2. *Jer.* 30. 11.

Law.

Lament. V. Verse 1.

THis is a Prayer, and Gods Children may speak largely, when they speak on their knees; yet their meaning is, not that the great God wants either memory or consideration, but they make [illegible] him of what he hath done, and against whom he hath done it, as *Chap.* 2. 22. to confirm their own faith, and to beg of him to shew his mindfulness (as [illegible]) by the [illegible] thereof [illegible] good [illegible]

Verse 2.

It's a [illegible] of God, [illegible] a mans estate [illegible] hath an house [illegible] but if he have not, [illegible] he is in [illegible] case then Christ himself [illegible] *Luke* 9. 58.

Verse 3.

Gods Children are *as* Orphanes, and *as* Widows, yet they are not Orphanes, *John* 14. 18. for they have a Father, *Luke* 12. 30. nor Widows,

Jer.

Jer. 51. 5. for they have an Husband; God is their Father, Christ is their Husband, *Rom.* 7. 4. *Isa.* 54. 5.

Verse 4.

What [illegible] here, [illegible] to be re-
[illegible] to [illegible] extremity [illegible]
[illegible] they [illegible]
water [illegible]
money, [illegible] which they [illegible]
have, [illegible] of all [illegible]
[illegible] else, the [illegible]
in the [illegible] they were [illegible]
their own water, [illegible]
of So[illegible] How [illegible]
have [illegible] yet
if we h[illegible] they, [illegible] be
without [illegible]

Verse [illegible]

To [illegible]
states [illegible]
necks, [illegible]
and be [illegible] but more
grievo[illegible] but thus it
fares with them [illegible] to put
their necks under the Lords Yoke,
and submit not themselves to his easie
service, nor regard his rest, *Jer.* 6. 16.

see

When

When Children continue in their Fathers sins, they justly bear their own iniquity, and their Fathers also; they that *are*, bear the sins of those that *are not*, yea, suffer worse things then ever they did, because (having their example before them) they should have *considered* better, *Ezek.* 18. 14. when the Fathers *are not*, and yet their sins *are*, when there is a *series* of sin, and a succession of sinners, God may punish whom he will, when he will.

Verse 8.

They that will not be under Gods yoke, are under *Canaans* Curse; they are not only servants to men of honour, but they become (and that without any deliverance) *the servants of servants*, *Gen.* 9. 25. No marvel if they be made the taile, that will not make God the head, *Deut.* 28. 43, 44.

Verse 9.

Men will venture their lives (when the Sword waits for them in the wilderness) to save their lives, *Job* 2. 4. But how sad is that sin which brings

men to that ſtrait, that either they muſt famiſh for want of bread, or go upon the ſwords point to get it?

Verſe 10.

How *terrible* is a Famine, which makes men white like milk, *Lam.* 4, 7, black *like an Oven*. Sin is a moſt deformed, and a moſt deforming thing, *Jer.* 4. 23, 28, *&c.*

Verſe 11.

Raviſhing is the worſt of War, and that in *Zion* and *Jeruſalem*, is the worſt of raviſhing; for the filthineſs and inhumanity of the ſin is aggravated by the holineſs of the place: but when holy places are fould with ſin firſt, they are tainted with judgement after, *1 Sam.* 2. 22. and unwilling raviſhments are a juſt puniſhment of willing whoredoms, *Jer.* 13. 26, 27. *Ezek.* 23. 10, 11.

Jer. 5. 8.

Verſe 12, 13, *&c.*

Here, and in the verſes following, their miſery is ſet forth, as it was extended to all ſorts of perſons, *v.* 12, 13, and unto the diſſolution and deſolation

ſolation of the ſtate, both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical; *Verſe* 14, to *v.* 19.

Verſe 12.

As for higher Perſons, they, that is, their cruel and conquering enemies were ſo far from honouring *Elders* (notwithſtanding their age or office) that even *Princes were hang'd up by their hand*, when they had gotten them into their power, and ſo they added to their death the ignominy of the vileſt and baſeſt death, which is *hanging*, *Gal.* 3. 13. *Eſther* 9. 13.

As for thoſe of the meaner or younger ſort, *they took the young men to grinde*, which was not, as it is with us in wind-mills, or water-mills, but in heavy hand-mils, or by cruſhing the corn in great mortars; which was both a ſore labour, and a ſordid, impoſed upon the vileſt ſlaves, *Exod.* 11. 5. *Judges* 16. 21. and yet (becauſe God will pay wicked men in their kind) the ſame thing is threatned againſt thoſe *Caldeans*, and the moſt delicate of them that put Gods People to this Servitude, *Iſa.* 47. 2.

Mean while, this ſhews, that our ſins and luſts fight, not only againſt

our ſouls, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. and ſtates, but againſt our names and honour, and they that uſe God courſely, and as they pleaſe, ſhall be uſed by enemies baſely, and as they liſt (1 *Sam.* 2. 30.) yea, and that beyond their ſtrength; for ſo much was laid upon *Children*, and immature young ones, that they *fell down* under the weight of it.

O what wrong do ſinful Parents do their poor Children? (*v.* 7.) whom yet God doth not wrong, when he brings them to this, becauſe they alſo are ſinful.

Verſe 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

After the miſ-uſing of all ſorts of men, here is ſet forth the deſolation of the ſtate; For,——

1. 1. There is no Civil Government expreſſed by *the Elders ſitting in the Gate*, where judgement was wont to be adminiſtred, and matters of publick concernment to be diſpatched. *Gen.* 34. 20. *Ruth* 4. 1.—— 2. There being no Government, but inſtead thereof, tyranny, there's no peace, joy, *Muſick*, *Dancing* (an ordinary, though an ordinarily abuſed, expreſ-

ſion

ſion of joy.) The youngeſt ſparks, *Ecc.* 11. 9. grow melancholy, muſt mourn, *verſe* 14, 15. — 3. The *Crown is fallen off*, that is, all the Ornaments and Dignity of the ſtate lye in the duſt, which cannot but produce (ſuch an impreſſion doth miſery make upon the whole man) both *fainting hearts* within, and *dim eyes* without, *Pſal.* 6. 3, 7. *Verſe* 16, 17.

2. (Which is worſt of all) there's no Church-comfort, and therefore eſpecially, there are fainting hearts and dim eyes, becauſe *Zion*, and the beautiful houſe there (wherein God was wont to be in a ſpecial manner, enjoyed, ſerved and praiſed, *Iſa.* 64. 10, 11.) is now burned, and become ſo deſolate, that the fearful Foxes (fearful of men where there be Inhabitants) walk boldly upon it. 2.

The riſe and uſe of all this is ſet down, *verſe* 16. *Wo unto us, for we have ſinned*; for ſo much grace is left in Perſons of *Jeremies* heart, even when nothing elſe is left, as to lay all their deſolation at the door of ſin, whereby the juſt Lord is acquitted, and all is put upon this account, even

when God hath destroyed them: O *Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thine help*, Hos. 13. 9. We have no helper but our God, no destroyer but our selves.

Verse 19, 20, 21.

This whole Book of *Lamentations* is concluded:

1. With a most firm ground of faith, *viz.* that when all other things fade, *God endures* the same, *Ps.* 90. 1, 2, 3. *for ever*, both in himself, and towards his people; He is stable, and they shall be established, *Psal.* 102. 25, 26, 27, 28. yea, His *Throne endureth from Generation to generation*; He sits on the Throne still, and governeth the World in the saddest and most dissatisfying changes that fall out here below, 1 *Kings* 12. 15, 24. *Jer.* 40. 3.

2. With a complaint of sense, *verse* 20. for sense will speak as things *are*, whatsoever faith saith concerning what *shall be*, *Psal.* 89. 37, 38, *&c.* to *verse* 46.

3. With a Prayer of faith, *verse* 21. (*viz.*) that that God who can turn the state of things, when, and as he pleaseth, *Psal.* 115. 3, and 80.

3. and

3. and 126. 4. yea, and the hearts of men also, would so return them *unto* him, as that they may be returned by him, and their state and dayes be so *renewed*, that they may be such as they were *of old*, *Jer.* 33. 7. 10, 12. — see *Esther* 9. 1.

Albeit for present a check be given to the arguings of faith by the wayward, and carnal reasonings of the flesh, so that the flesh (that will have the last word) utter nothing but *wrath and utter rejection*, *verse* 22. yet in our highest troubles, a countercheck is to be given to the clamours of the flesh, and of fleshly reason, by the consideration of the constant nature, firm covenant, unresistible power, and gracious promises of the great God, *Psal.* 92. 8. *Isa.* 54. 10. *Jer.* 14. 19, 20, 21. *Rom.* 11. 1. *Isa.* 43, 13. *Hos.* 13. 14.

Verse 21.

In this Prayer, a spiritual heart-turning lies at the bottom, *Zech.* 1. 3. which also the word *unto thee* seems to import, albeit their outward returning and renewing be more fully expressed, and seem more suitable to

the former *Lamentations*, see *Psal.* 90. 13, 14, 15, 16. Indeed they go both together, (as we see in *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 31. 18, 19, 20.) for when God renews any man outwardly in mercy, he renews him inwardly first, to make him meet for that mercy. But O, How great a comfort is it, that a mans outward Estate is never so lost, ruined, and laid in the rubbish, but God can renew it, and make it as good as ever it was; only we must remember, that conversion of heart is to go in Gods order, before conversion of state, which being carefully looked to, there is a promise, not only that a mans estate shall be as good, but (if it be good for him, *Psal.* 34. 10.) *better then in his beginnings*, *Ezek.* 36. 11. And though (as here it is said, *verse* 14.) all young mens musick be gone, yet (as it is *Zech.* 8. 5.) *the streets of the City* (if it be a City of *truth and holiness*, verse 3) *shall be full of Boyes and Girles playing in the streets thereof*, which to God is very feasible and familiar, though to us (poor creatures) it seem marvelous, and even impossible, *verse* 6.

A Question taken out of the precedent Book of the Lamentations, *the resolving whereof may give in some light in stranger and darker providences.*

The Text, Lament. 3. 37, 38.

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not Evil and Good?

Question.

How can God be said to Command all things, when divers things (as namely those mentioned before, v. 34, 35, 36.) are so bad? And how can Evil come out of Gods mouth?

Answer.

Answer.

For answer to both these (which fall one within another) it is to be observed, that there is a double command of God; one *doctrinal*, the other *providential*; or (to speak more plainly) a command of the word of God, enjoyning such and such things, or of the counsel and government of God, ordaining and ordering them. The first of these is not spoken of here, (for that no man can do ill in obeying) but the latter. To open this further, it may be considered, that *Commanding* (as it is usually ascribed to God in Scripture) signifieth not the uttering of so many words, but the ordering out of such or such a work. Thus in the Creation, *God Commanded, and all things were Created*; (a) which was not a command *by words*, but *by will*: To say *let the Earth bring forth grass*, (b) is nothing else, but to do that which God doth still (but at first, more admirably) that is, to *cause the grass to grow*; (c) His causing is, his commanding: So, to *send forth his Commandment*,

(a) Ps. 143. 5.

(b) Gen. 1. 12.

(c) Ps. 104 14.

Commandment, is, *to give snow*, and to send forth his *Word*, is, to *cause* the wind to blow. (d) Accordingly, it is said, *Psal.* 105.33, 34. *He spake, &c.* that is, he would have it so; therefore the Non-plust Magitians said not, this is the voice of God (albeit Gods voice and word were in it) but *this is the finger of God.* (e) Thus we say, that in several Parties, there be some leading and *commanding* men; not that they send out commands to their company, but because they over-rule them by their parts, as God doth them, and all, by his power.

(d) Ps. 147.15, 16, 18.

(e) Exod. 8.16, 19.

This commanding power is applyed two wayes:

First, to *things good and beneficial*; so God is said to *command deliverance* for his people: (f) And so, he hath *commanded* his Covenant for ever, (g) that is, ordained and ordered the making good of it, in the redemption and preservation of his people. I.

(f) Psal. 44.4. and 133.3.

(g) Psal. 111.9. to 20. 1 Chron. 16.15.

Secondly, This is applyed to *things evil*, to wit——

1. To the evil *of affliction* and adversity; and that God commands, and is I.

is the Author of unquestionably, as well as of prosperity; (h) all such evil is *from his mouth*, (as it is here) that is, from himself, and for the fulfilling of his own mind and pleasure.

(h) Isa. 45.7. Amos 3. 6.

As men do things by express command and word of mouth, so doth God without that, as well as if there were that.

2. This may be applyed to the *evil of sin*, albeit therein there be more difficulty, and therefore things are to be understood the more warily; yet therein also what followeth may be said (as I conceive with submission) agreeably to the word of God, *viz.*

2.

1. As the Acts of sin in men, are Acts of Judgement in God, so they may be applyed to God without fear, as the crushing injustice and oppression spoke of in the foregoing verses. There was nothing more unjust and cruel then the *Babylonians* usage of the *Jewes* whom they led captive; yet the Lord is said expresly to do it, all along the second Chapter of this Book of *Lamentations*, nothing being more just, then that God should set Tyrants and Oppressors over them, that will

1.

will not be subject to him. (i) This, as it comes from God, is nothing else but *the evil of affliction for sin*, albeit (as fierce men manage it) it is in them *the evil of sin for affliction*, and for the greater vexation of the people of God. The conclusion therefore of the complaining Church, hath not in it any intimation that God hath done them any wrong, but all is resolved into this, *Wo unto us that we have sinned*, (k) *Thou hast punished us less then our iniquities deserve.* (l) — Again, *Thou art just in all that is brought upon us.* (m) yet see what dreadfull things God brought upon them, 2 *Chron.* 36. 17. *&c.*—

(i) 2 Chron. 12. 8.

(k) Lam. 5. 16.

(l) Ezra 9. 13.

(m) Neh. 9. 33

2. All sinfull things pass under Gods determination; (n) government, inspection, and intention to make his own holy use of them, (o) though the least sin never have his approbation, or any countenance from him. (p) A Judge may condemn a man unjustly, and an Executioner may do his office maliciously, (both which are great sins in them) yet even these things *thus done* (though not *as they are done thus*) the King may

2.

(n) Acts 4. 28.

(o) 1 Kings 12. 15.

(p) Lam. 3. 36. Hab. 1. 13.

may be said to do, becaase they are done by his commission, issued forth from himself, and by virtue of his Authority, as he is the Supreme Governour of the state, yet hath he no hand at all in the injustice or malice of those Instruments, by whom the Government is mis-managed. So the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* got away *Job's* goods by a great robbery, yet *Job* saith, truly, *The Lord hath taken away*; (q) for it was done by the grant, or (we may say) commission (not of approbation, but of administration) which the Devil had from God, and whereby he was impowred to do what he did; for so it is said, *all he hath is in thy power*, when yet for his person there was a *proviso*, Job 1. 12.

(q) Job 1. 21.

3. It's clear, that sinful things pass under Gods permission, who could easily hinder evil doers if he pleased. (r) When God bad *Balaam* (f) Go, (who had mind enough to curse his people,) His meaning was not, that he allowed him to go, as if it had been a thing lawfull to go *as he did*, for God had forbidden him before,

3.

(r) Gen. 31. 29
(f) Num. 22. 20, 32.

before, *v.* 12. and his way was *perverse*, *v.* 23. but he *suffered* him to go, and yet shewed his displeasure against him when he went, because it was a sin for him to go, in regard of his own will; albeit God let him go in his own divine wisdom, that there might be a perpetual monument of his power and mercy in his Churches behalf, by hindring him from cursing, yea, by turning his curse into a blessing. It may be said further, that God lets sin pass on by with-holding that grace (which he is not bound to give, (t) whereby it might be better. (u) Nay, by an act of judgement, he gives men up to *vile affections*, to *strong delusions*, and a *reprobate* (or injudicious) *mind*, *Rom.* 1. 26, 28. 2 *Thess.* 2. 11, 12.

(t) Mat. 20 15.
(u) Deut. 29. 4 Hos. 4. 17. Rev. 22. 11.

4. All things fall under, and fall out by Gods providence; (w) whereupon *David* saith of *Shimei*, *Let him curse, because the Lord hath bidden him curse David*; (x) that is, this is through the disciplinary providence of God, who hath taken away my Majesty, the reverence of my Son and Subjects, and exposed me to this outrage.

(w) Jobiz. 16
(x) 2 Sam. 16. 10.

Diodate.

rage. *God hath said, curse*, that is, God will have it so, and therefore hath set it within the frame of his providence; for otherwise, curling Kings was never bidden, but alwayes forbidden. (y) God by his secret providence, makes use of all his Creatures to serve his turn, and fulfill his will as to other ends, so for the tryal of his Servants, (z) and this is said to be his bidding or commanding. But further and besides this, God so ordereth things by his providence, and there is such a frame of providence set up, as whereby the corruption of wicked men is excited to do the most sinfull things, but for all that, the frame of providence (which is Gods) hath no evil in it. Thus God by commanding the Children of *Israel* to pitch in such a place, of which *Pharaoh* would say, (a) *They are entangled, the wilderness hath shut them up*, hardened the heart of *Pharaoh*; that is, that posture of providence did work upon, and stir up his corruption, harden and steel his malicious heart to pursue them; which wicked heart of his, God also by his just Judge-

(y) Eccl. 10. 20

(z) Job 30. 11.

(a) Exod. 14. 2, 3, 4.

ment,

ment, yea, by this very providence, hardened (as the Sun doth the clay) without any blame. In like manner, it is ſaid concerning the *Ægyptians*; (and that ſeems very high) *He turned their hearts to hate his people, and to deal ſubtilly with his ſervants*; (b) but it was but a providential turning; God infuſed no hatred into their hearts, but only defuſed occaſionally and providentially, the hatred which was their own, and lay in their hearts before; And this is clear from the words going immediately before, *v.* 24. *viz. He encreaſed his people greatly, and made them ſtronger then their Enemies*; And ſo he turned their hearts to hate them, (c) and ſet their ſubtilty awork to cruſh them; And yet that providence and proſperity of *Iſrael*, was ſo far from having any evil in it, as that it was an act of Gods great mercy and benignity to his people, but it ſerv'd abundantly to the *Ægyptians* to turn, that is, to make them themſelves to turn their hateful hearts to all ſuppreſſing and oppreſſing courſes of and on them, whoſe number & power they feared.

(b) Pſ. 105. 25.

(c) Exod. 1. 9, 10.

5. 5. God ſtrengthens mens natural parts and powers (as a Creator) whereby evil things are done by his ſinfull Creatures.

(d) Exod. 9.16 Thus God *raiſed up Pharaoh*, (d)
(e) Rom. 9.17. and made him ſtand it out luſtily; (e) He raiſed him, by bringing him into the world; and raiſed him again, by giving him the honour of a King, and the ſtrong and ſtout heart of an incenſed King, ſo that he wreſtled with
(f) Col. 1.17. God, (f) as a weak-hearted man could not have done; God ſtrengthning his naturals, (as men ſhall ſtand up in Hell to bear their torment) that ſo he might magnifie his power in throwing him, that flew in his face, down
(g) Exod. 14. 3, 4. at his feet. (g) As ſometimes we ſee, (if the compariſon be not too low for this place, but it may ſerve for illuſtration) a ſtrong Diſputant heartens his Adverſary, improves his Arguments, provokes him to ſay his beſt, his worſt, that he himſelf may better ſhew his ſtrength and skill in laying him on his back. So whereas *Achitophel* was an *Oracle* for wiſdom, God that gave him his wit, let him retain it in his Rebellion againſt *David* (when

(when he could easily have stript him of it, (h) and will have him to exercise it in giving pestilent counsel to *Absolom* the Arch-Rebel, that so at length he might the better shew his wisdome and his power in defeating him, and destroying him, and that with his own hands. Nor could any man murther another man, but that God supporteth his natural powers and motions, whereby he doth [himself] that wicked act. There are the same Naturals used in a Duell, as in a Lawfull war; and those Naturals (together with all their vigour) are of God, but the formality of the action, serving a mans pride, or malice, or both, in the one, and his Prince in the other, maketh the difference.

(h) Job 12. 17, 20.

6. God worketh in sinfull actions to *limit* them as he pleaseth, as he did the Devil in the case of *Job*, so that at first, he could touch his state only, not his body, and afterward, his body, not his life. Thus God so limited the *Amalekites*, (i) that though they took Women and Children Captives, yet they did not kill them, which was a thing to be won-

6.

(i) 1 Sam. 30. 2

dred at, becauſe *David* had be-
(k) 1 Sam. 27. 9 fore (k) ſlain of them *every man and woman* : but this was thus done by the will of God, that thoſe dear Relations taken away by the Enemy, might be re-enjoyed by *David* and his men. And ſo alſo the precious veſſels of the *Temple* were carried away by the *Chaldeans*, yet they were not all broken to pieces, but kept ſafe by the greateſt power in the world for Gods uſe in his Temple, after the Captivity, *Ezra* 1. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

7. 7. God governeth and ordereth all things (the worſt of things) for his own good and glorious ends. Hence *Joſeph* (when his brethren wickedly ſold him) ſaid, *God ſent him to ſave their lives by a great deliverance.* (l) *Pilate* abuſed the power he had *from above*; (m) And *Judas*, and the *Jewes* committed a greater ſin then he, in delivering, and ſhutting up *Jeſus*, unto, and under that power which was ordained of God for better purpoſes; But it was determined (n) in Heaven, that things ſhould be thus carried, becauſe God had an high and happy end

(l) Gen. 45. 5, 7.
(m) Joh. 19 11.
(n) Acts 4. 28.

in

in it, to wit, the Redemption and Salvation of Man-kind.

This then may be the Concluſion; let Dung-hills ſtink, and men (like them) do all ſtinking and odious things; yet the Sun is ſtill pure, and there will never be found in the moſt Holy God, any ſhadow of being the Author of any Sin; eſpecially, ſince he never ſo much as ſuffers any evill to be done, without a power and purpoſe to bring good out of that evil.

DAVIDS

Sorrow and Support.

1 *Sam.* 30. 4, 6.

Then *David*, and the people that were with him, lift up their voices and wept, till they had no more power to weep: ——

—But *David* Encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Question.

WHat is to be said to the weeping and great Lamentation of the Servants of God, for the loss of these outward things, and for the disasters of this life?

Answer.

There are two things to be said to it.

1. *First*, That such weeping and mourning is not in it self unlawfull: It's

It's agreeable to nature, to be affected and afflicted with ſad things. *The eye affects the heart*, Lam. 3. 17. and then *the heart affects the eye*, Lam. 4. 17. Many wept for Jeſus, and unto them Jeſus ſaith, not only *weep not*, but *weep*, *Luke* 23. 27, 28. yea, *Jeſus* himſelf *wept*, *Joh.* 11. 35. The wounded body ſends forth blood, the wounded ſpirit ſends forth tears, for tears are the blood of the ſoul.

To ſpeak more particularly, Grief and Sorrow there may be, and we find them in Scripture, to have been upon the enſuing conſideration.

1. *For the loſs of outward enjoyments*, but eſpecially of *neer Relations*. This we ſee here in *David* and his Men, whoſe City was fired, and whoſe Wives, Sons and Daughters were all taken Captive; *They wept till they had no more power to weep*, which (by the way) may ſhew that there is not cauſe of diſcouragement, if in a way and day of repentance, ſome cannot weep as others do, becauſe they have not power to *weep naturally*, ſuch as others have; yet is every humble ſoul willing to 1.

weep at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a caſe to his power, and beyond his power, as 2 *Cor.* 8. 3. But now we are ſpeaking, not of weeping for *ſin*, (which deſerves tears beſt, but hath them leaſt) but of weeping and ſorrowing for *ſuffering* in *ſtate* and *friends*, which we find other-where in *David*, and the whole Company that was with him, (2 *Sam.* 15. 30.) in a ſad mutation of State, and long before that in *Job*, as to State and Friends both, *Job* 1. 20.

2. 2. For the *Affliction of Joſeph*, *Amos* 6. 6. and the miſery of *others*, though we ſuffer not as they do; as *David*, that was himſelf ſpared in that great Plague, that came for *Iſraels* Sin; and *Nehemiah*, that was advanced himſelf to a great place in Court, yet both the one and the other mourned greatly and graciouſly out of reſpect to others, 2 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Neh.* 1. 3, 4. And to ſhew we are really affected with their ſad condition, we ſhould do all the good offices we can for them, — Both by *making prayers* for them, as *Abraham* did for *Lot*, *Gen.* 18. 23. and 19, 29.

and

and by *ſeeking*, through Jeſus Chriſt; *Reconciliation* for them, as *David* did in the Plague, by building an *Altar*; and as *Hezekiah* and *Judah* did for their afflicted Brethren of the *Ten Tribes*, 2 *Chron.* 29. 24. — And alſo by *works of Charity*, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, carrying the feeble, houſing the houſe-leſs, *Iſa.* 58. 7. and affording neceſſary accommodations to neceſſitated Creatures, *Luke* 10. 33, 34. as the *Iſraelites* did at laſt, that were ſo cruel to their Brethren at firſt, 2 *Chron.* 28. 15.

3. The *reproach of Enemies* (eſpecially *Church-reproach*) is a great reaſon of Lamentation, *Lam.* 3. 45, 46. Thus *Nehemiah* mourned for the reproach of the Church, of which he heard, *Neh.* 1. 3. and of which afterwards he was an eye witneſs, *Neh.* 4. 4. So it is a matter of great mourning, when we are in danger to be uſed by proud and cruel Enemies according to their pleaſure. Hence the people of *Iſrael* wept at the wofull tidings of the men of *Jabeſh*, partly out of *Compaſſion* towards their Brethren, and partly (perhaps) becauſe 3.

if

if there were not a *remedy*, they might fear the like uſage themſelves, 1 *Sam.* 11. 4, 5.

4. 4. When there is any *juſt fear of looſing our Religion*, that's the higheſt cauſe of Lamentation. Hence *Eli* was ſo *ſolicitous* about the *Ark*, and ſo ſtricken dead with the taking of it, as alſo the wife of *Phinehas* was, 1 *Sam.* 4. 13, 19, 20, 21, 22. Nor is it to be doubted, that *David* was deeply and ſadly affected, when he and the *Ark* parted, 2 *Sam.* 15, 25, 26.

The *Lamentations* of *Jeremy* will warrant our *weeping* in ſuch *dolefull* caſes, but nothing will warrant exceſs: *Mourn* we ſhould, as thoſe that be *not without ſenſe*; for its a great ſin *not* to take to heart Gods high and heavy hand, *Iſa.* 42. 25. and 57. 11. yet, not as thoſe that be *without hope*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13. for there is alwayes *hope in Iſrael*, and in *the God of Iſrael*, *Ezra* 10. 2. 1 *Sam.* 30. 8. *Jer.* 14. 8.

There remains to be ſaid to this *Queſtion*.

2. *Secondly*, That *grief* being (as o-

ther

ther passions are) apt to be unruly, divers Rules are to be observed for the well ordering of it; (*viz.*)

First, We are still to observe, that when *Sin*, and the *hurt* that sin doth, the *spoil* that sin makes, are both together, we should more *lament* the sin, then all we suffer by the sin; as, when it was said to *David*, *The Sword shall never depart from thy house*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 10. he doth not in all the 51 *Psalm* mention the Sword, but he doth expresly mention both his sins (in the title, and *v.* 14.) as the things that lay more heavy upon his heart, and did more bruise and break it, then all that was threatned against him for it. So *Ezra* in the day wherein he *lamenteth* the Churches *Sin*, with an exceeding great *Lamentation*, although he mention the Captivity also, yet he sets their sin above the *Seventy Years Captivity*, saying, *Thou hast punished us less then our iniquities deserve*, *Ezra* 9. 13. he makes that long punishment the less, and their sin the greater thing. 1. 1 *Rule.*

To enlarge this a little, because we are apt to weep over Ruines, and

to

to let the ruining Sin ſtand by unlamented, or leſs lamented, like Children, that have a deep ſenſe of the *Rod*, but ſcarce any of their faults that forceth the Father to it; I ſay, to enlarge this, I ſhall ſubjoyn four reaſons, why *Sin* ſhould be much more *lamented* then Affliction: *viz.*

1. 1. Becauſe *Sin* is againſt the glorious God, againſt the King of Heavens Peace, and Crown, and Dignity, when puniſhment lights only on us malefactors. What's the hanging of a Felon, to the wronging of a King? But——

2. 2: Conſider, that *Sin* brought Chriſt, the Son of God, to thoſe higheſt ſufferings, which if he had not been God, he could never have born. The *Thieves* ſuffered the pain of the *Croſs*, as well as *Chriſt*; but what was that to the pain of the *Curſe*, and the *wrath* of God which lay upon him in its fulleſt weight? *O, who knows the power of thy wrath?* Pſal. 90. 11. With this unknown wrath, Chriſt was acquainted, he knew it by experience, and groaned under it; but why was that, ſave only, becauſe *Sin*

is

is ſo horrible a thing, that leſs then that would not ſerve to take it away that all man-kind might not periſh?

3. Whereas *Fire*, and other *Judgements* take away the World from us, Sin takes away God from us, *Iſa.* 59. 1, 2. *and makes him become our enemy*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 16. *Iſa.* 63. 10. What is it to looſe a Sumptuous Houſe, (which makes us to think ſeldome of a Houſe in Heaven, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1?) Or, to be taken off from our Delicate Fare, (which did but make us more intemperate?) Or to have Cloathes, *like Goodly Babyloniſh Garments*, *Joſh.* 7. 21. burnt, which did not ſo much cover nakedneſs, as diſcover pride, and help to maintain a great height of heart? I ſay, what are all theſe, to the looſing of a God? and therefore what are they to that ſin, whereby we looſe both them and *Him*? The *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* have taken away my Eſtate, yea, the *Fire* of *God*, *Job* 1. 16. *hath burned my Goods*, is a ſad complaint; But theſe *ſins of mine have taken away my Lord*, and I know not where to find him, *Joh.* 20. 13. that's a far ſadder, and as much a- 3.

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bove it, as our God is above our Goods.—— And what if Children be loſt? that indeed comes much nearer, then the loſs of the World, cauſe the World is about us, but Children are of *Us*, and are in a ſort our *Selves*, and in whom we look to *Live* when we are *Dead*; But when all's done, the great matter of ſorrowing is, that the *Child Jeſus is miſſing*, *Luke* 2. 48. *Iſa.* 9. 6. It's an ignoble and unworthy thing for a Chriſtian to ſay, my *Houſe*, my *State*, which my *ſoul loved*, is gone, the *Fire hath quite conſumed it*, and then weep out his eyes, becauſe ſuch another *Phœnix* will not riſe out of thoſe aſhes; but it becomes him well to ſay, *My dear Lord and Husband, whom my ſoul loveth*, hath withdrawn himſelf, therefore *I will weep whilſt I want him, ſeek till I find him, and hold him faſt when I have him*, Cant. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Now (to come to the point) becauſe it is our *laxineſs*, *Cant.* 5. 3, 6. our *Luke-warmneſs*, whereby we looſe him, therefore we ſhould *Lament* that above all our *Loſſes*. O that we could dwell upon the *Meditation*

tation of this, that ſin is the *Achan*, the *Ahab* that troubles *Iſrael*; Sin is the *Hazael*, of which it may be (as it was of him) truly ſaid (yea more then of him, for it was ſin that ſet him awork:) *Thou O ſin, haſt ſet our ſtrong holds*, (that City that was the ſtrong hold of the Nation) all on a light fire, and nothing could quench it, for our *fiery Luſts are unquenchable*.

Laſtly, Whereas all the ſad worldly diſaſters that befall us here, can but befall us only here, and afflict us temporally; ſin brings not only the judgements of a *temporal*, *but the Vengeance of Eternal Fire*, Jude v. 7. 4.

O that we did but know and conſider the evil that is in ſin, by the evil that ſin brings; this would allay our grief, for this is a ſure Rule, to wit, *That our afflictions will ſeem greater then they ſhould ſeem, till ſin ſeem as great as it ought to ſeem*; but if ſin, and the offending of God ſeem great, and if that be lamented moſt, affliction will ſeem little, be lamented leſs, and the humbled ſoul will ſay, *Lord, any fire, ſo it be not Eternal Fire*, for

even

even that also I deserve, and I hope, this will so purge me from sin, and so heat me in a way of holiness as to prevent that.

Thus of the first Rule.

2. 2 *Rule.* *Secondly*, We should not sorrow (as hath been in general said before) for *worldly losses*, and outward abatements immoderately,

And that upon these considerations: ——

1. 1. Because of the nature of these worldly things, (considered with our nature) which is such, as that ——

1. 1. *They cannot satisfie us*, Isa. 59. 2. *They cannot fill the heart of man*, Eccles. 5. 10. *Absalom*, though a Prince, must have his Fathers Crown; and *Ahab* though a King, must have *Naboths* Vineyard. —— 2. They can, and usually do corrupt us, as we see in *Uzziah*, whose heart, *when he was strong in his state*, was lift up to his destruction, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16. Yea, we saw it in a better King then *Uzziah*, that is, in *David*, who having a strong Mountain made him of God, he looked too much to the Mountain,

2. and

and too little to the Maker, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. And have not some of us had such secret thoughts as these in our worldly hearts? *I have so much here, and so much there, and so much in a third place*; therefore though others be straitned, yet I shall shift for my self well enough: No marvel therefore if our Mountain be turned into a Mole-hill; It's time for us to learn, and better at last then never, *That God is still a burner of Gods*, Jer. 43. 12, 13. *and will rather fire our States, then loose our Faith.*

2. Because all our Sorrow for things that are gone, can do us no good; It may kill us, (*for worldly sorrow worketh death*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10.) but it cannot cure us. As all our Cares cannot add one *Cubit* to our *stature*, *Mat.* 6. 27. so neither can ous Sorrows add one *Cubit* to our *state*. If an House be gone, weeping over the rubbish will not build it; If a state be gone, tears will not recover it, no though we weep till we can weep no more; no more then *David* could have recovered what he had lost, if he had done no more, 1 *Sam.* 30. 4, 8, 9.

3. 3. Because, to grieve excessively for worldly things is an Heathenish thing; and it's very unhandsom for a Christian to act an Heathen: it is to do like them that have no Father; whereas believing Christians, though they have not a farthing, yet they have a Father *who knoweth all the things they need, Mat. 6. 32.* and will supply all their needs, *according to his Riches, in a glorious way by Christ Jesus*, Phil. 4. 19.

4. 4. Because God may take this mourning out of measure, very unkind, yea, very hainously at our hands, and say, (that I may allude to *Joab's* speech, 2 *Sam.* 19. 6.) *Thou hast declared* by this excessive despondency in this day of ruine, that thou regardest not me; I perceive, that if thy House and State had been left alive, *it would have pleased thee well, but now they are dead and gone, and buried in ashes; I that am the ever-living, and ever-giving God cannot please thee.* What? Is there nothing in thy mind, and in thy mouth, but *what shall I do for the hundred Talents?* What shall I do now I am undone? Let the man

of

of God (O man of grief) give thee thine answer, and do thou take it, and take comfort in it, *The Lord is able to give thee much more then this*, 2 Chron. 25. 9. And he will do it, if it be for thy good, and thou be good, *Psal.* 34. 10. *Rom.* 8. 28.

3. We are not to mourn for earthly down falls *inordinately*; for all inordinate affections, are absolutely unlawful, and to be *mortified*, Col. 3. 5. Now we grieve inordinately, when we grieve for worldly things with a worldly spirit; whereas Christians should shew they have not the spirit of the world, but the spirit of God, in outward, as well as in spiritual things, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. 3. 3 *Rule.*

Quest. *What's this Worldly spirit?* *Answ.* It is a spirit (if we speak as to the matter in hand) so ingaged in the world, and so endeared unto it, that all their joyes and sorrows, in whom this worldly spirit dwelleth, are ordered, and put forth themselves, according as the world is up or down with them, smiles or frowns upon them. If it smile, and come full-handed to them, then they sing a song

of rest and rejoycing to their souls, (as the rich man did, *Luke* 12. 19.) but if it frown, and present an outward danger, such as there was in *Abigals* Relation and cold story to *Nabal*, of the danger he was in by *David*, then they are like men knock'd o'th' head, and the very conceit of it, makes their heart like a stone; *Nabal* was stricken stone-dead, 1 *Sam.* 25. 37

The world is their *Benjamin*, and their life is bound up in their livelihood, *Gen.* 44. 30. How sad and sick, as 2 *Sam.* 13. 2. was *Ahab*, because he could not drive a bargain with *Naboth*? and might perhaps have dyed (as *Nabal* did) but that *Jesabel* gave him Physick, worse then the disease, 1 *Kings* 21. 4, 5, 7, 8. Such things as these shew what a worldly spirit is, whereby men weep or dance, according as *Mammon* mourns or pipes, *Luke* 7. 32.

4. Our lamenting outward losses should be with a godly spirit, ordered according to the Word of God, which is seen in two things, *viz.* In taking a godly course, and in sorrowing on godly grounds.

4. 4 *Rule.*

1. In

1. *In taking a Godly course*, in the day of our distress and anguish, that is, in turning worldly sorrow into Godly sorrow, as *David*, that (when Gods hand was heavy upon him) was sometimes silent, and in his dumps, and sometimes was disquieted and *roared*, but the conclusion was, that he took to heart his sin, and confessed and so was comforted, *Psal.* 32. 3, 4, 5, 6. It will be hard to find a promise to prop up them that sorrow meerly for the world; for promises are made to vertue and holiness, not to howling, *Hos.* 7. 14. But if it turn to sorrow for sin, and the offending God, (as *Davids* loss of his Child, and the ever abiding sword did, *Ps.* 51. 4, 9.) then, there will be found promise upon promise; Namely — 1. The promise of remission of sin, *Hos.* 14. 3, 4. For though, if a man break his heart for the world, God will despise that, and smite a *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 37, 38. (heart-kill'd already by a worldly dart) with bodily death; yet an heart broken with sin, he will never despise, but thereupon deliver the soul from its guilt, 2 *Sam.* 12, 13. *Ps.* 51. 14. 17. 1.

2. *The promise of State Restitution.* We find, *Joel* 2.15,18,22,23, 24. that upon Fasting and Repentance, God returns rain after a long restraint by Gods words of restraint (as the Scripture speaks, *Jer.* 14. 1.) *and therewith all plenty*, v.23,24. Yea, and restores that which the *Locust* and *Cankerworm* have devoured; as if he meant to make restitution, and pay *Reparations* for the hurt his *Army* hath done, *v.* 25. *Proportionably*, we may say, God will restore what the *Fire* hath devoured; for it was the *fire*, that is, a kind of *fire*, and a scorching, and drought that did them hurt in those dayes, *Joel* 2. 19. which God recompensed by a succeeding seasonable rain, *Joel* 2. 23. So can God, after any other *fire* and *state-loss*, give full recovery, as he did to *David* and his men after the firing and plundering of *Ziklag*, 1 *Sam.* 30. 18, 19.—

— 3. After repentance, (especially general and solemn) is promised also (and that as the most eminent mercy) *spiritual plenty*, Joel 2. 28. And truly, that's a very sad *temporal loss*, after which there is not more

spiritual

spiritual grace, and by which some good lesson is not learned, *Psal.* 94. 12. that is, either a greater forbearing of that which is evil, *Psal.* 119. 67, 71. or a greater zeal, and less luke-warmness in that which is good, *Rev.* 3. 19.

2. *In sorrowing upon godly grounds.* 2.

When the hand of God gives a man a great blow in his outward Estate, he may be sad *religiously*, (especially, if it be a general lighting upon many well-minded persons) I say, he may sorrow *religiously*, upon these Considerations.——

1. Because, now God is like to have less glory; for rich men and good men honour the Lord with their riches, *Prov.* 3. 9. which they cannot so well do when they are poor, having not wherewithal, — 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. 16. 1.

2. And (perhaps) less service; as in former times, by reason of drought and scarcity, *the meat-offering and the drink-offering was withholden from the house of God*, Joel 1. 13. Hence there was so sad a complaint, for the burning of the Temple, *Isa.* 2.

64. 11. whereof there is cauſe alſo, when *all the Synagogues* in a Land, or moſt of the meeting places in a City are burnt up, *Pſal.* 74. 8. for there is backwardneſs enough in the ſervice of God when there be all conveniencies, but much more there will be when ſuch accommodations are wanting. It requires ſome heat of zeal to ſit in the ſtreets, *Ezra* 10. 9. when luke-warmneſs hath fired the walled Houſes, wherein Congregations were wont to meet with abundance of ſhelter, eaſe and pleaſure. Beſides, a man that hath a ſtate may maintaine the Miniſtry, and uphold the ſervice of God, otherwiſe then he can do when hath it not, 1 *Chron.* 29. 3. *Luk.* 7. 5, 8. and 8, 3.

3. 3. Becauſe Relations and others that ſtand in need of our charity and kindneſs, muſt needs have leſs to relieve and comfort them. A King can do no more then he can do, 2 *Kings* 6. 27. Hereupon, many may ſay to their poor Friends and Kindred, *It grieveth me for your ſakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out againſt me. O call me not* Naomi, ſaith many a one,

a one, (whose name is pleasant enough) but call me *Mara*, for I was full, but now the Lord hath made me quite empty; I did relieve, and assist others, I shall have enough to do, now to subsist my self.

4. Because there is less (and that much troubleth an honest heart) wherewithal to do justice, and pay every man his own, when the Rule is, *pay thy debt, and live of the rest*, 2 Kings 4. 7. 4.

Now in all these troubles, there is the working and exercise, not onely of an humane and moral, but of a godly spirit, which therefore carrieth a comfort in the bosom of it, because there is a respect to God and godliness in it; And withal, there is this ease in it, that neither God will be strict with us for that which in truth we cannot do (he having by his own hand disabled us) *but will accept a willing mind according to what we have*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Nor will godly and merciful men exact with severity, where there is no ability, but forbear, till God make us able to do in a greater or lesser measure, that which

which for present it may be, we can hardly do in any measure: — But yet it is a grief not to be able to do what in justice we ought to do, yea, not to be able to do the good we are willing to do, especially, having been able to do it formerly.

5. 5. We are to take heed, that our
5 *Rule.* grief be not any way ill-conditioned. Let it not therefore be —

1. 1. A duty-hindring grief; either,

1. 1. In our general calling; there should not be so much anguish, as to take away, or hold off our hearts from hearing a comfortable Sermon, as *Exod.* 6. 9. or from making a calm or warm prayer, but either it will be too hot, (as *Jonah* 4. 1, 2.) or too cold (as *Isa.* 64. 7.) these things ought not so to be.

2. — Or, 2. In our particular calling, even as *David* failed in this, who when *Absolom* was slain, was so much a Mourner, and so much a Father, that he did not act decently, the part of a King, 2 *Sam.* 19. 5. It is not comfortable to mourn, so as that none can live comfortably with us.

2. Nor

2. Nor a ſoul-amazing, and amacing grief, laying us all along the earth in a deſpairing poſture, as *Saul's* ſorrow did him, 1 *Sam.* 28. 20. But, albeit we ſit for a time aſtoniſhed (as *Ezra* did, *Ezra* 9. 4, 5.) yet we ſhould ariſe (as he did) from our heavineſs, and perform the offices belonging to us in ſuch a *Condition*; *As namely theſe four.* 2.

1. To humble our ſouls before God in repentance and prayer, *Ezra* 9. 6. to the end. 1.

2. To heighten and lift up our ſouls by the exerciſe of our faith, becauſe there is hope in *Iſrael* ſtill, *Ezra* 10. 2. 2.

3. To renew our Covenant with God, for the reforming of all things amiſs, *Ezra* 10. 3, 12. The firſt of theſe ſhews, that we do not deſpiſe Gods correction, *Prov.* 3. 11. The ſecond, that we are not weary with it. The third, that we mean to be better for it, and bring forth the fruit of it. And all ſhew that we think we have to do with God, and that we love to have to do with God, when we are under his hand. Sure, as the 3.

burning

burning of *Joabs* field brought him to *Absalom*, 2 *Sam.* 14. 29, 30, 31. so the use of our sad fires which God sends, is not to affright us from him, but to bring us nearer to him; whereas, when all is well and entire, many men are so far from coming in any reverent and serious manner, to the most High God, that they walk in their goodly Houses (as *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 4. 29, 30. in his palace) in a great height of heart, and with a carriage amounting too much to that language, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, Jer. 2. 31.

4. 4. To use the best lawful means for the recovery of our losses; (acquainting God with it before hand, 1 *Sam.* 30. 7, 8.) *David* did not only weep, but sought the Lord, and then fought the Enemy, and got that again that was caught from him, 1 *Sam.* 30. 19. When there is corn in *Egypt*, when there are courses to be taken, though with difficulty and much travel, men must not sit down, and in the confusion of their souls, stare one upon another, but take courage, and apply themselves to such

such courses as are necessary for the preservation and reparation of themselves and their families, *Gen.* 42. 1, 2.

Lastly, To put just and satisfying limits to our *Lamentations*, it will be necessary for us to turn ourselves from outward to our spiritual enjoyments; yea, it will be our wisdom to think that God takes away the one, that we may betake our selves to the other, whereas, when we have both, we are apt to hold by both, and to trust God with a pawn: He therefore takes away the *Competitor*, and removes the mountain, because a man sayes, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. *I shall never be moved* because I have such a mountain. God must strain, that he may have his due. What's to be done then, but to turn to him for spiritual comforts, at least, when our outward comforts are overturned? And indeed, it is an happiness, and a great mercy of God, that any man is able to make a good claim to the best comforts. It is the misery of worldly men, that they have comforts only of one kind, that is, worldly comforts, and when they are gone all's gone, they

6 *Rule.*

they may say, *they have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* Judg. 18. 24. But how rich are godly and faithfull men, who have comforts of three kinds, outward, spiritual, and eternal? when the first is gone, the other two are left, which are the good part that cannot be taken away, *Luke* 10. 42.

More particularly, if the question be, what those spiritual enjoyments are, to which we are to betake our selves; I answer,

They are the Covenant of God, and that God with whom we are in Covenant, by both which *David* encouraged himself, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. It was in the Lord, that can do all, and in his God, who therefore was engaged by his Covenant, to put forth his power for his relief in the day of his distress, *Psal.* 50. 15.

The Covenant is the Cabinet of many precious promises, wherewith alone we can bear up, and chear up our selves in sad providences, wherein (if as God is faithful, that hath promised, so we have faith to receive the promise) there are two promises especially,

especially, that will much stead us, and stay us up: to wit,

1. That God layeth no more on any of his Children, then he maketh them able to bear, *Psal.* 55. 22. 1 *Cor.* 10, 11. and the question is not how heavy the burthen is, but how strong the back and shoulders of him that is to bear it. Yet the meaning of that promise is, not that we shall be able to bear affliction without grief, (for every affliction for the present is grievous) or great affliction without great grief, (for *David* wept till he could weep no more) but without *sinning*, *Job* 1. 22. against God, (at least without falling out with him, *Job* 2. 10. or falling off from him, *Job* 13. 15. *Psal.* 125. 3.) and without *sinking* before him, *Isa.* 57. 16. A faithful person is a self-encouraging person in the utmost extremities, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. We say, a woman is able to bear a Child, or many Children, but we do not mean, she is able to do it without any pain, or without much pain, but she stands under it, gets the better of it, yea, forgets it, because a Man-child is born into 1.

into the world. The first thing said of *Job* is, *that he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*; (for impatience and fretting in affliction, is a drawing up of a foolish charge against the onely wise God, who is the author of it.) The second thing is, that when the hand of God grew much more heavy with sore Boiles all over his body, yet then he did not fall out with God, but fell into this *heart-sweetening* Meditation; What? *shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* Job 2. 10. The third thing is, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*, Job 13. 15. God shall kill *him*, before before he shall kill *his* faith; which shews, that whatsoever complaint he made, yet he did never utterly faint; there was still a reliance on God, on the sense of his innocency, and in the hope of his Salvation. Now, how great is this comfort that as God sometimes sent a man before into *Ægypt*, to sustain his Church there, so he sends strength before, or at least *with* all the troubles and tryals of his Servants, and that so great, that notwithstanding

all ſpoiles in their ſtates, boiles on their bodies, yea buffeting of Satan on the faces of their ſouls, yet they ſhall ſay ſtill, *Thy Grace, O God, is ſufficient for me*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Nothing can bring them to ſpeak ill, to think ill of God; or if through extremity, there be any ſuch thing, they abhor themſelves for it, and are never well, till (like a pure ſpring) they have purged themſelves of all ſuch mud, and be again clear and ſerene in their thoughts of God; yea, they have ſo much ſtrength, that as they cannot think ill of God, ſo they will not believe, (being themſelves, and not under ſome deſertion, tentation and ſickneſs of the ſoul, which ordinarily laſts not long) I ſay, they will not believe that God thinks ill of them, no not though he come with a ſword and kill them, for he can kill them, and ſave them both at once: Of this *Job* is a full witneſs, who notwithſtanding all the unkind objections of his Friends, as if he were an hypocrite, and one hated of God (becauſe ſo afflicted) yet he had ſo much ſtrength, as to ſtand it out againſt

them to the utmoſt, *Job* 27. 3, 4, 5, 6. Yea, as to *maintain his own wayes before God* himſelf, who knew what he was, and *who* he aſſured himſelf lov'd him ſo well, & had ſo good thoughts of him, that he would *be his ſalvation*, when yet no Hypocrite and falſe-hearted wretch ſhall come before him, *Job* 13. 15, 16.

2. The ſecond precious promiſe is, that *God will cauſe all things to work together for Good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. If we do not love God, there's an end; we muſt go thither for our relief, where we have placed our love, ſee *Jer.* 8. 2. But if we can ſay, each of us in the uprightneſs of his heart, *Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee*, Joh. 21. 17. then may we certainly ſay, that all our evils and afflictions, the Plague that infects us, the War that affrights us, the Fire that devours us, all theſe things, and all other things, (though they be far worſe things) ſhall work for our good; And are we troubled, that God is at work for our good?

But beſides ſuch *Covenant-promiſes*,

our higheſt refuge is, a *Covenanting* & *all-ſufficient* God, *Gen.* 17. 1. It will never be throughly well with us, till we contract our comforts, and ſum up all in this, *whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none* (there is nothing) *upon Earth that I deſire beſides Thee*, Pſal. 73. 25, 26. It is good for me to draw nigh to God, though I have nothing elſe but God; for, not only when my ſtate fails, but when my fleſh, and (which is worſe then that, *Prov.* 18. 14.) when my heart faileth, that I have neither houſe nor trade, nor health, nor heart, *God is the ſtrength of my heart*, and when all other portions are gone, *He is my portion for ever.*

Happy is that people (or perſon) *that is in ſuch a caſe*, Pſal. 144. 15. *yea, happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord*; ſuch can never want either comfort or courage, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6.

Fœlices nimium bona ſi ſua norint
—— Chriſticolæ.

Glory be to GOD.

Comfort enough in Gods way.

Isa. 40. 1.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, ſaith your God.

Queſtion.

WHat is to be done for our comfort, when we are under the heavy judgement of God?

Anſwer.

It is to be noted in the firſt place, that divers of thoſe things that ſhall be hereafter mentioned, either have been ſpoken of in the things foregoing, or, at leaſt, may be ſpoken of, and conſidered [as our way of duty;] but now I ſhall ſpeak of them [as our way of comfort.]

And ſo ſhall name theſe enſuing particulars.—

1. *Firſt*, Humiliation] and Submiſſion to the hand of God, unto which is annexed the Comfortable Promiſe of being *exalted in due time*; (a) So

(a) 1 Pet. 5. 6.

it

it was ſaid of old, *If their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they accept of the puniſhment of their Iniquity, then I will remember my Covenant, remember the Land*; (b) that is, ſo as to give in all Covenant comforts; for Gods forgetfulneſſe is the *ſhutting up*, and his remembrance, the letting out of his tender mercies. (c) As our remembrance of God is our Obedience, *Deut.* 8. 11. ſo Gods remembrance of us is his beneficence, *Gen.* 30. 22. Now, by *accepting the puniſhment of our Iniquity*, is not meant onely, that we ſhould not except againſt it, but that we ſhould approve it, (d) put our affliction (when it is at the higheſt) underneath our ſin, (e) and think our ſelves very well uſed, in that we are not worſe uſed, (f) and quite conſumed. This humbling, and the grant of ſome deliverance, we find joyned together, and the latter following upon the former, 2 *Chron.* 12. 7. and 33. 12, 13. We do not conſider how much comfort we might have by ſpeaking well of God, and giving forth

(b) Levit. 26. 41, 42.

(c) Pſal 77. 9. and 136. 23.

(d) Neh. 9. 33.

(e) Ezra 9. 13.

(f) Ezra 9. 14. with Lamentations 3. 22. Neh. 9. 31.

an honourable report of his Justice in an undone condition. O how acceptable to God is our humble acceptation of his severest Dispensations? *Job* 1. 22. and 2, 3.

2. *Secondly*, Reformation] containing in it (as it relateth to our comfort) these three things.——

1. *A through amendment* of our wayes, upon which followeth this comfortable promise of God made to his people, that *He will cause them to dwell in the Land which he gave to their Fathers for ever and ever.* (g) This amendment, this *through* amendment of our wayes, is much to be marked and minded; for Formalities, outward Priviledges and performances will not serve the turn; (h) no, nor the highest engagements, and best purposes and promises, if there succeed not a real performance; since, if that be wanting, it appeareth that people do not turn to God *with the whole heart* (i) *but feignedly*, as the *Jewes* did in *Josiah* his high and (on his part) hearty, but on *Judah*'s part, hollow, reformation; after which therefore

(g) Jer. 7. 5, 6, 7.

(h) Jer. 7. 4.

(i) Jer. 3. 10.

as there was no goodness proportionable to their profession in *Josiah* his dayes, so there was no good, but a running on of all more and more to utter ruine; so that their piety and prosperity were both buried in *Josiahs* Grave. It's usual with men to trade with Religion as the times are, and indeed to mock God. O what Covenant-renewing was there in *Nehemiah*'s dayes, and *Nehemiah*'s presence? what writing? what sealing? what swearing? what cursing? (the more to bind themselves in Gods Law. (k)) Yet soon after, in the absence of *Nehemiah*, how sadly did they break their Covenant? particularly, in the Article of the Sabbath. (l) But what comes of this falseness and ficklenes? Surely, the conclusion is, not comfort, and an end of judgement, but *more wrath upon Israel*; (m) But when there is a *through* search for *Achan*, and a *through* execution done upon him, then *the Lord turns from the fierceness of his wrath*; (n) then, there is, *not more*, but *no more* wrath upon *Israel*; yea, instead of that, there is all good success and pro-

(k) Neh. 9, 38. and 10. 29.

(l) Neh. 10, 31 and 13. 6. 15.

(m) Neh 13. 18

(n) Josh. 7. 25, 26.

greſs in their military affairs, and proportionably, there will be ſufficient comfort in civil affairs alſo, — ſuch as that God-ſeeking, and Sin-declining *Jehoſaphat* had. (o)

(o) 2 Chron. 17. 4, 5, 12.

2. Reformation includes, the leaving of our particular and ſpecial ſins, that do God the greateſt wrong. Hereupon, there are comfortable promiſes of pardon and proſperity, after the *Jewes* Captivity, *Hoſ.* 14. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Yea, this forſaking of thoſe ſins, to which we have been tempted moſt, by which we have gained moſt, and to which we have been accuſtomed moſt, is that which prevents caſting into the worſt fire; (p) and conſequently, conduceth to our beſt eſtate, for they that are kept from the fire of their Judge, are received into the joy of their Lord, *Mat.* 25. 21.

2.

(p) Luke 3. 9. 1 Cor. 13.

3. This turning from ſin, ought to be, without returning to it any more, *Hoſ.* 14. 8. ſincerity and through-dealing ſaith, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* (of what kind ſoever they be) unto which ſins, if there be a returning, ſinners (that have turned from them) are ſo far from

3.

comfort,

comfort, that their condition is thereby made much worse then it was before, as we find it was with the *Jews*, that put away their Servants, and therein their sin, and yet presently after took both again, *Jer.* 34. 15, 16, 17, 20, &c. But, if the reformation be real, not formal, radical, (that is, of those sins that be most rooted in us) and not superficial, and withall constant, not taking leave of them as we do of our friends, that is, *till we see them again*, and have a new opportunity to re-enjoy them, but as *Moses* of *Pharaoh*, *I will see thy face again no more*; (q) Then certainly, as *more sin* brings *worse* things then a thirty eight years infirmity, (r) so *no more sin*, will be followed with better things, it being our sin *that separates between our God and us, and that keeps desired good things from us.* (s) Yet may we not think, after our best resolutions, or thereby bind our selves, not to sin any more, or not to commit any the same sin again; But two things we may do, that is,

1. We may resolve and engage (with respect to the assistance of Divine

(q) Exod. 10. 29.

(r) Joh. 5. 5, 14.

(s) Isa. 59. 1, 2.

1.

vine Grace) against *groſs ſins*, ſuch as that of Idolatry, and the common ſins of debauch't men, which even Nature it ſelf cryes out upon. Nor is a long cuſtome in ſin to be pleaded for the continuance of it (though the Evils men are accuſtomed unto, (t) Jer.13. 23. are more hardly left: (t) I ſay, that may not be any mans excuſe, for an haynous ſin after an horrible judgement; for conſider the *Jewes*, they were ever accuſtomed to Idolatry, yet at length, we find a conſtant reſolution and engagement againſt it, *Hoſ.* 14. 3, 8. which was ſo far kept, as that it doth not appear they were Idolaters after their long Captivity, (as aforetime they had ſtill been) but (on the contrary) that the Character of a Jew was, *Thou that abhorreſt Idols*, *Rom.* 2. 22.

2. And we are to be very carefull and provident, not to return to leſs ſins, for even *for fooliſh talking and jeſting, cometh the wrath of God upon the* (u) Eph.5.4,6. *Children of Diſobedience*; (u) that is, ſuch as make no ſcruple of ſuch matters, but give themſelves a liberty in them, and give themſelves to them.

them. *Davids* numbring the people (which God reckons not with his high sins, (w)) even that brought a sore Pestilence, after a foregoing three years Famine, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. It is said, *again the anger of the Lord was kindled*, (x) in reference (it seems) to that former Famine; for one great Judgement is not a *supersedeas* or discharge from another, if sin be renewed, albeit it be not a very hainous sin. To add another instance: It seems to be no great matter, that *Hezekiah* shewed all his Treasure to the Ambassadours of the King of *Babylon* (as it is ordinarily accounted but a friendly and decent complement for Persons of Quality, to shew all the rare and precious things they have to such as give them an Honourable Visit.) But how doth God interpret this in *Hezekiah*? That appeareth, because hereupon *there was wrath upon him*, yea, *upon Judah and Jerusalem* also, who (it seems) had some share in the sin, as appears by their succeeding humbling themselves, together with their King. (y) Men easily pass over such things, or set

(w) 1 Kings 15. 1 5.

(x) 2 Sam. 24. 1.

(y) 2 Chron. 32. 25, 26.

set a mark of honour upon them, being apt to do the like themselves; but God finds and notes in so good
1. a man as *Hezekiah* was, —— 1. Unthankfulness, in making no better an use of his rescue from the *Assyrian*, and from the Jawes of death in his late sickness, and both of them most miraculously, wch should have made him to set up God alone, to walk humbly before him, depend for the future on him, without being so
(z) Isa. 39. 2. *glad*, (z) and so taken with the Honour of an Heathen (reflecting it like, on his own ends and advantage
2. in it.) —— 2. God observes in it the *lifting up of his heart*, with so magnificent a visit, with the account that was made of him by so great a Monarch, and with the precious things he had, which might shew how considerable a King he was.

Now, that there may be no mistake here, I shall easily grant, concerning those whom God hath adorned, and whose houses are beautified with such choice things, as but a few have, that it is not in it self a sin, but may be both lawful and usefull

to

to shew their Friends all the good things they (above others) enjoy from a good God. This (no doubt) we may well do, so it be done well, that is, with an humble acknowledgement, that we are *less* then the *least mercies*, (b) and much more are we less (in desert) then greater and more un-usual enjoyments. —— And with the praising of God for them. —— And with the stirring up of others to thank God together with us, *Psal.* 34. 3. who see what he hath done for us. —— And lastly, we may do it, that having Friends, *we may shew our selves friendly.* (c) Yet is there ordinarily in this case, that which was objected against *Hezekiah*, to wit, unthankfulness to God for them, by not ascribing them as we ought unto God, but sacrificing too much to our selves, (d) and not using them, as we should for God; And also, a secret self-exaltation in the shewing of them, which may make God angry with us, yea, and (possibly) with the Land, which usually is pleased overmuch with such things, and loves (over and above) to have it

(b) Gen. 32. 10

(c) Pro. 18. 24.

(d) Hab. 1. 16.

it ſo, becauſe it makes for the ſplendour of the Nation, which ſeem to be the reaſon why wrath came (as was ſaid before) upon *Judah and Jeruſalem*, over-glad as well as *Hezekiah* that ſuch a Monarch did ſo congratulate with their King, albeit he might be left to that ſin, for their other ſins, as *David* was, to number the people, 2 *Sam.* 24. No marvel, if what is over-much admired be *fired*, for God is ſo jealous a God, as that he cannot endure creature-Rivals, and partners with him in his Glory.

1. 1. Now, to come to the cloſing up of this Head (wherein a greater enlargement then was at firſt intended, may ſerve for further inſtruction) the concluſion is, That a through reformation will certainly end in conſolation, for *whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins, he ſhall have mercy.* (c) And the Mercy of God is the Mine of comfort, *Pſal.* 66. 20. and *Pſalm* 136. throughout.

(c) Pro. 28. 13.

3. *Thirdly*, followeth for our reaping comfort by affliction, *Obſerva-*

tion,

tion, and a being able thereupon, to make declaration of the good leſſon or leſſons we have learned by the afflictions we have lain under. There is not onely a comfort, but a *bleſſednesse*; (f) for that man who hath both a chaſtening and a *teaching* God, *And ſuch ſhall have reſt in the dayes of adverſity*. God, by ſanctifying his Chaſtiſement to them, gives them reſt and peace, either of ſtate, or of heart, (g) when general, and the moſt deſtructive Judgements ſhall fall upon the wicked, who lie like dead men in the houſes of the living, till their *pit be digged*, and the grave made ready to caſt them into it, and ſhut them up in it. How ſmall a matter, is ſo great a matter as a City-fire, being compared with a national fire? A good uſe of the former, is a good means of preventing the latter, or (howſoever) of a ſupport and ſerenity of heart in it. The neceſſity of learning ſome profitable leſſons (in order to our comfort) in the Houſe or School of Correction, may appear by *Solomons* prayer, wherein this is added, as a very

(f) Pſal. 94. 12, 13.

(g) Phil. 4. 7.

needful

needful clause or close, and a fore-runner also of outward mercy, — *that thou teach them*, or, *when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk*; (h) for there is little hope of a good Land after the evil of affliction, if there be not a good way after the evil of sin, of walking in which holy way, affliction is, and ought to be a good help, though it will never be attained, unless we be taught of God. To enlarge somewhat on this useful subject, I shall not deny, but that there may be a profiting by correction (as well as a growth by instruction) in an holier habit of heart, and a greater watchfulness in the carriage *in the generality*, and yet it may be difficult to produce distinctly the *particulars*, wherein the profiting appeareth: but (notwithstanding that) this may be well said, that it will be very comfortable (and comfort in affliction is the thing we are now upon) and also that after an eminent affliction, we should more exact it from our selves, to be able to say, (and to shew it to our own consciences, and to Christian Friends, if there be occasion

(h) 1 Kings 8. 35, 36. with 2 Chron. 6. 27.

for

for their edification.) I ſay again, to ſay, on the one ſide, *Here's the loſs I have had*, and on the other ſide, *Here's the leſſon I have learned*; wherein alſo we have the example of the *beſt Servants* of *God* for our *imitation*. The *Leſſon* that *Job* learned by his ſtrange affliction was, *ſelf-abhorrency*. (i) Indeed before his affliction, there was *ſelf-ſuſpicion*, and much *vigilancy* over all his wayes; (k) yet *in it*, there was *diſplicency*, *turbulency*, and ſome unhandſom and ſtomachful *reflections* upon *Gods diſpenſations*, (Chriſtians take heed of theſe things in your *higheſt ſufferings*,) becauſe of unparallel'd *calamity*, where there was unparallel'd *integrity*: But after *God* had undertaken him, and ſhaken him up, all this *chaff* was *winowed* out of him, and his great *purity* and *perfection* appeared in this, that, unto the higheſt *piety* teſtified of him in the beginning of the book, there was added the *loweſt humility* in the end of it. O how compleat is that *holy man* whom grace makes higheſt, and at the ſame time makes loweſt, and who *perfecteth holineſs* (not with haughtineſs, but) *in*

(i) Job 42. 6.

(k) Job 3. 25, 26.

(l) 2 Cor. 7. 1. *the fear of God!* (l) Thus *David* alſo by a great fight of affliction got many ſpoils. As namely, —— 1. *Faith*, by fighting with the *Lion* and the *Bear*, whereby he dared to enter the Liſts with *Goliah*, and thereby no doubt was animated (as *Sampſon* by renting the *young Lion* that roared againſt him, (m)) to fight all the enemies of God afterward: And how full a faith was there gotten at laſt by that great *tentation* (ariſing from worldly mens proſperity, and heavenly mens daily diſcipline) that was ſo grievous at firſt? (n) —— 2. *Patience*, the affliction of a rebelling Son, helped him to bear (more quietly then any about him could) the reproach of a railing *Shimei*. (o) 3. *Holineſs*, hence *David* ſaith (and that (no doubt) with much comfort, becauſe God by his affliction had made him *partaker of his holineſs*, (p)) that it was *good for him*, (q) that he was ſo afflicted, for before that, he *went aſtray*, but after, *kept Gods word*, and way, (as *Jonah* did after he had been in the *Whales* belly; (r) and thereby *learned Gods ſtatutes* ſo, as to *take forth* of his leſſon. O how much better

1.

(m) Judg. 14. 5, 6.

(n) Pſ. 73, 21, 25, 26, &c.

2.

(o) 2 Sam. 16. 9, 10, 11.

(p) Heb. 12. 10

(q) Pſ. 119 67. 71.

(r) Jon. 3, 2, 3.

ter are our afflictions then our aberrations? & how much better is it to *learn* with ſmart, then never to go to School where the rod is uſed, to make us learn our leſſon the better? — 4. The *loweſt* (I may ſay the higheſt) ſubmiſſion; for, afflicted *David* (caſt out of all) did not only ſubmit to the leaving off, and leave the leaning on his own Mountain, (ſ) and Kingly State which was taken from him by his Son *Abſolom*, but alſo (if God will favour him no more then to have it ſo,) to the leaving of the enjoying of Gods own *Mountain*, *Ark* and *Ordinances*, (t) which *Saul* thruſt *him* from before, and *Abſolom* now. If God will have it ſo, he will too, for God and he have not two hearts; his mind is, that all *Gods wills*, *Acts* 13. 22. ſhould be fulfilled, both by him, and on him. Unto both theſe, *Paul's* example may be added, who by fighting with the devil on his knees, got ſo much from hell, as not to be exalted above meaſure, though he were taken up into the third heaven; (u) yea, (to make up all, & which is far above all) it is ſaid, that Chriſt himſelf, *though he were the Son*, yet

(ſ) Pſ. 30. 6, 7.

(t) 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.

(u) 2 Cor 12. 7, 8, 9.

learned obedience by the things he suf-
(w) Heb. 5.8. *fered,* (w) that is, he learned experimentally, what it was to subject himself to the office of our Mediator. We may not think here, that the Son of God, taking upon him the form, and submitting himself to the subjection of a servant to his Father, needed to be forced to that *obedience* to his *will*, to which he was (of himself) so perfectly willing, or that he (as we) needed to be taught any thing; but yet, as he learn'd, in a sort, compassion to us,
(x) Heb. 2.18. and 4.15. (x) so he may be said to learn by his *sufferings*, obedience to his father, that is, by *experience*; he never knew experimentally how much it would cost him to be so obedient, till he learned it by undergoing what he was to suffer; and that he may be said to learn thus, by degrees, that is, by one suffering after another, till at length, he came to learn it most fully by the suffering of death. Even so will the experience of affliction teach us also (by our submitting to the several degrees of suffering) and that most feelingly, what it is to obey God to the utmost, and withal will educate us, and habituate

bituate us to it, and make us more and more meet for it; as Schollars come to learn higher books, by learning lower first; or rather (becauſe we are ſpeaking of experimenting) as war is learn'd beſt by being in battel often. All theſe examples ſhew, that affliction is Gods School, wherein much of God and godlineſs is to be learn'd; and if we have learned it, we may very comfortably and chearfully kiſs that Rod that hath taught it, and bleſs that God that hath us'd it, and made it effectual for that end. —

Fourthly, comfort in our calamities is obtained of God in that way, wherein all good is obtained, (y) and that is, *ſupplication*. When the Angel prayeth, and ſpreadeth before the Lord, the eſtate of his long afflicted Church, then the Lord anſwereth with good words and *comfortable* (z) Of this going to God in prayer, when we are under his juſtice, there are three encouraging grounds. — 1. *The goodneſs of Gods nature*, who *though he cauſe grief, yet will have compaſſion*, (a) yea, in wrath, *he remembers mercy*, *Hab.* 3. 2. whereof we have a famous

4.

(y) Ezek. 36, 37. Jer 29. 12, 13.

(z) Zech 1. 12, 13, 14. Joel 2. 17, 18. 2 Kings 19, 14

1.

(a) Lam. 3. 32.

instance in Scripture; for when the wrath of the Lord was gone out against *Judah* for their sin, in a very high degree, so that they were slain with *a rage reaching to heaven*, & two hundred thousand of *Israel* were spoiled and carried away captive; yet, even then, the Lord in mercy sent a Prophet to rebuke their brethrens rage, whereby they were so over-awed, that they *cloathed the naked captives, gave them to eat and to drink, and carried the feeble upon Asses, that they might get home.* (b) Thus also, *David* found how true that was, which his faith spake before hand, to wit, that *the mercies of the Lord are great*, in that we read of his repenting even when he was destroying. (c) Faithful prayer is never without comfort, because the God we pray to, is so full of pity; sure, *the great King of* Israel *is a merciful King.* (d) As men, that are indeed men, that have humanity in them, provide Chyrurgeons for those whom themselves have wounded, so the same God *tears and heals, smites and binds up,* (e) ruineth and raiseth, burns and builds.

(b) 2 Chr. 28. v. 8. to v. 16.

(c) 2 Sam. 24. 14, 16.

(d) 1 King. 20 31.

(e) Hos. 6. 1.

2. *The gracious and precious promiſes of God* made to his Church and People, *Pſ.* 94.14,15. *Iſa.* 57. 15,16, 17,18. *Ezek.* 36.11. *Hoſ.* 6.2,3. *Joel* 2. 25,26. all which places and promiſes, refer to the ſad trials the people of God were under; whereupon therefore we may pray with comfort, and confidence in the like caſe. In the merciful nature of God, there's a good *may be*; (f) but if there be a promiſe once, then it *muſt be*, for God is a God *that cannot lie*, (g) and therefore what he hath promiſed, cannot but be performed. A man could have no heart to pray, if he had not a promiſe; but when a word and a promiſe is revealed, therefore (ſaith *David*, and ſo may any faithful man) *thy Servant hath found in his heart, to pray this prayer unto thee.* (h) How comfortably therefore may we pray, having ſo many cheering covenant-promiſes? and ſay each of us to his ſad heart, Why art thou ſo heavy O my ſoul? Why art thou ſo diſquieted within me? *Be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it hath been told me,* Acts 27.25. — 3. *Experience*, to wit, 2.

(f) Joel 2.13, 14. 1 Kings 20.31.

(g) Tit. 1.2.

(h) 2 Sam. 7. 27.

of Gods gracious dealing, and wonderful appearing in the behalf of his
(i) Pſ. 74. 12. people in former times, (i) wherein we find God working *the firſt time*, and bringing his *Church* out of *Ægypt*, and then ſetting his hand again *the ſecond*
(k) Iſa. 11. 11. *time* (k) to ſample, yea to go beyond, *Jer.* 23. 7, 8. his former work in returning them out of the captivity, ſo that the broken *walls*, and the *burned gates*, and houſes of *Jeruſalem*, were again repaired, and re-edified; Yea, if we look forward, we expect the receiving, and re-ingrafting of the *Jewes*, who have been ſo many *hundred years* rejected; ſuch experiments, and ſuch an expectation may awaken us, to awaken the Lord, for the obtaining of
(l) Iſa. 51. 9. mercy in every extremity, (l) for God is ſtill the ſame in regard of his goodneſs, truth and omnipotency; his Children are ſtill the ſame, in regard of their faith and ſincerity; and *Prayer* is ſtill the ſame in regard of its power and efficacy,
(m) James 5. 16, 17. (m) whereby it becomes a conſtant comfort in every calamity, *Pſal.* 22. 4, 5.

5. *Fifthly*, Higher trouble ſupplieth matter of conſolation by its *preparation*,

vision, that is, by its arming of us for the better and easier undergoing of farther and greater affliction if God call us to it. This hath been touched before, I shall now a little further enlarge upon it, & shew more fully (because it is not so much marked, as is meet) the benefit of it; *Herein* a light will arise from common experience; for a daily labourer, labours best; one train'd up in war, fights best; (n) one much us'd to Sea, fears least, and bears the terrours of it best; of all which, there is one common reason, which is, because use maketh all men prompt and ready, and more resolute to contend and cope with more formidable things. All difficulties are better endured by our being inured to them: Yet here it is necessary to observe, that it is not the bare enduring, but the well managing of affliction, that begetteth true fortitude. A *corroboration*, indeed, there is by the very use, and being accustomed to harder things, which ordinary men seeing they have past through, and overcome by natural courses, and reliefs, there ariseth in them a natural hardiness for

(n) 1 Sam. 17. 33.

for future things of the like nature: but that which begetteth Christian magnanimity is, the overcoming of such tryals, by the exercise of grace; for gracious persons find by experience, that they have obtained much comfort and confirmation of heart in their hardest tryals, by the acting of repentance (in which way, they have reasoned the case with God, and been reconciled to him.) (o) And of faith (assisted by prayer) whereby they have been supported and erected, by resting on the promises of God; (p) whereunto may be added, the observation of the fruits of righteousness, and the spiritual good they have gotten in the School of outward affliction; from which they collect truly, that (whereas the stoutest Mariners are put to a stand in the utmost perils, (q) yet that by the same repentance, faith & assured good fruit, they shall get well through every other future calamity, even of the highest kind. And O what a comfort and satisfaction is this, to be able to say, by overcoming this *Lion* and *Bear*, I bless God, I am so con-

(o) Isa. 16,17, 18. Psal. 32. 5, 6.

(p) Gen. 32.12

(q) Jona. 1.5,6

confirmed, as not to be afraid of meeting any *Goliah*? Let natural men pleaſe themſelves with *Sauls* armour, and their ſecular ſhifts, I know mine to be armour of proof. The ſuccours of religion are above all the ſhocks and aſſaults of the moſt impetuous and ruine-threatning affliction.

Fifthly, and *laſtly*, our conſolation lies in our *Expectation*. Is the ſoul heavy, very heavy, quite caſt down? This ſoul ſadneſs is a ſad ſickneſs, but the medicine is at hand, *Hope thou in God*. (r) Hope in the creature may quickly (as the creature may) *give up the Ghoſt*. (f) It is God only, that makes good our hope, for he is the everlaſting God, ever living, and ever ſhining in his *glorious attributes* of *Almightineſs* and *Mercy*, to make good his whole covenant, (ſum'd up, in *mercy promiſed*, *Luk.* 1.72.) to all thoſe that walk uprightly before him. (t) Hence the concluſion, and the heart-upholding reſolution is this, *My ſoul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him*, *Pſal.* 62.5. This hope is a good hold even in this life, but yet reacheth forth it ſelf (that it may be ſure

5.

(r) Pſal. 42.11.

(f) Job 11. 20. Pſal. 146.3,4.

(t) Gen. 17. 1. Pſal. 62,11,12.

ſure not to make us aſhamed) to the life to come. Even in this life, (I ſay) hope hath its uſe, and we its help. Its true, that it were a moſt miſerable thing, if our hope in Chriſt were in this life onely, (u) (eſpecially, when Chriſtianity is under the ſoreſt perſecution) but yet it would be worſe with Chriſtians, then God would have it to be, and they would be much more ſubject to fainting, unleſs they believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord *in the Land of the Living*, (w) and thereupon hope and wait quietly for it. Godlineſs hath the promiſe, not only of that which is to come, but of *the life which now is*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. whereupon the afflicted ſervants of God live upon hope in the land of the living, that is, upon the hope that God will be gracious unto them, whil'ſt they behold and converſe with thoſe men that are the Inhabitants of this lower world; (x) accordingly *Paul* ſaith, not only *he hath delivered*, and *he doth deliver*, but we truſt alſo, *that he will yet deliver*. (y) From what God hath done, and doth, he gathereth hope for the future, and that concerning

(u) 1 Cor. 15, 19

(w) Pſ. 27. 13, 14.

(x) Iſa. 3. 8, 11.

(y) 2 Cor. 1. 10, 11.

cerning deliverances in this world, for they are such as wherein he desires the prayers of Saints, and the following of those prayers with thanksgivings on his behalf, for the preserving of him amongst them, to do their souls good. But here it is to be noted, that, since we in these days, have not such particular promises as *David* had of a Kingdom, or as *Paul* had for his preservation; (z) therefore we are to build our faith and hope on the general & most comprehensive promises of Scripture, as, that God will supply all our need, & suffer us to want nothing that will be for our good, (a) nor to suffer any thing that will not be for our good, (b) providing in both, for that which all good men set highest, and that is, his own glory. (c) Without these limitations, who would have any comfort? (yea, how can it be a comfort?) and with these limitations, we may hope to have every comfort, yea thereby it will be truly a comfort to us, when we have it; yet one thing must not be left out, and that is, that *our heavenly Father knows best what we need*, and the wise God discerns best what will be most

(z) Acts 18,10 and 23, 11. and 27. 23,24, 25.

(a) Phil. 4. 19. Psal 34. 10. Luk. 12. 29,30

(b) Rom. 8. 28

(c) Joh. 12. 27,28.

moſt for his glory and our good, and therefore we muſt not put our ſelves into a fools paradiſe, as *Haman* did, *Eſth.*6.6. and hope for what we pleaſe, but pleaſe God with our hopes, and confine and reſign our ſelves in all our expectations to his heavenly wiſdom and will. (d) It is enough for us, that it is really true, that if we truly fear and love God, we ſhall have any thing that we truly need, and that will indeed make for Gods glory, and our good; and what that is, it is beſt for us to leave to God himſelf to be the Judge. I ſhall add but one thing more, (with reſpect to the comforts of this life,) and that's this; If God withdraw from us, and when he hath withdrawn, with-hold alſo from us theſe outward enjoyments, we muſt not only be content with, but rejoyce in our ſpiritual portion, and ſay with *David* (by the ſame gracious ſpirit, wherewith he ſaid it) when *many ſay, who will ſhew us any good?* (the good of providence) I deſire onely one thing, and it is this, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, (e) and that ſhall put gladneſs enough into my heart. In which

(d) Mat. 26. 39. 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.

(e) Pſal. 4. 6, 7

which respect also, we may say with meek *Mephibosheth*, (heartily and nobly) *Let the Zibaes* of this world have all; It's enough for me, that *David*, that the Son of *David*, is come home into my heart, (f) together with him, I account my self to have *all things also*; (g) *Thy Grace (O Christ)* thy self, *is sufficient for me.* (h)

(f) 2 Sam. 19. 30.
(g) Rom. 8. 32
(h) 2 Cor. 12. 9.

Lastly, because our comforts cannot be compleated here, we must (as hath been said) extend our hopes to the things to come, and cast our anchor, not *without*, not on the loose earth of this world, but *within the vail*, (i) and look for our satisfaction in the following of our fore-runner, and the enjoyment of the heavenly vision. (k) Unto this best and last expectation, two things are required, purity and patience. 1. *Purity*, for every *one that hath this hope*, that is, the hope of enjoying the glory of the Children of God, *purifieth himself, even as he is pure*; by whose promise he finds in his heart (l) to hope for such glory. (m) Presumption, and a dead hope, *adds drunkenness to thirst*, and fouls him, that out of his fancy, promiseth himself

(i) Heb. 6. 19, 20.
(k) Ps. 17. 15.
(l) 2 Sam. 7. 27
(m) Tit. 2, 12, 13.

(n) Deut. 29. 19, 20. (o) Pſal. 19. 9. ſelf reſt & peace; (n) but a lively hope in God (o) is clean, that is, it is a cleanſing thing. And O what reaſon is there of preſſing to this purity, when *a fire not blown* (a fire that needed no blowing, that admitted no quenching) *hath ſo conſumed us?* (p) What is ſaid of the laſt fire, may be profitably ſaid of this, ſince ſo many glorious ſtructures are diſſolved, & melted with *fervent heat, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?* 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11. 2. *Patience*] *What we ſee not, we muſt with patience wait for,* (q) yea, wait we muſt *till the coming of the Lord Jeſus,* (r) and then (ſure) if it be well with *him*, it ſhall be well with *us*, for we ſhall be with *him* where he is *to behold his Glory,* (ſ) that is, to be admitted into the communion, & the ſociety thereof, *He being glorified in his Saints,* (t) in the ſtreets of this *New Jeruſalem*; there ſhall be no crying [*Fire, fire*] nor any other complaining; (u) but (on the contrary) when our Lord, and *our life* ſhall appear, *we ſhall appear with him in glory*, Col. 3. 4.

(p) Job 20. 26.

(q) Rom. 8. 25.

(r) 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Pet. 3. 12. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

(ſ) Joh. 17. 24.

(t) 2 Theſ. 1. 10

(u) Pſ. 144. 14.

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Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

FINIS.